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THE APOSTOLIC AGE

IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN CRITICISM





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THE APOSTOLIC AGE

IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN CRITICISM

BY

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THE APOSTOLIC AGE

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tainty are clearly brought out, and a proper proportion in the whole is observed.

Those who are familiar with the literature of the subject will recognize the various sources from which suggestion and guidance have been derived; it has not seemed desirable to make acknowledgments in detail.

It is assumed that the reader will be familiar with the narrative of the Book of Acts, and the repetition of what can be read there has been deliberately avoided. References to the New Testament have been given only when they seemed for one or another reason to have special interest.

J. H. R.



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I

CRITICISM AND THE APOSTOLIC AGE

In the body of intellectual work performed by the nineteenth century no mean place has been occupied by the critical study of ancient history. Greece, Rome, Egypt, the far East have occupied the attention and inspired the research of some of the best minds of our time. Not only have the discoveries of excavators and explorers brought new material to be studied, but new points of view, a more thorough and systematic method of investigation, a vastly increased corps of trained students have given new interest to the pursuit of the knowledge of antiquity, and have led to great achievements in positive and assured results. In every part of the field the tendency to broaden the range and improve the method of investigation can be observed. The study is made to cover all possible sources of knowledge, written, monumental, institutional, which can contribute to the complete picture, and it is attempted to take account of all the relations



in which the subject studied stands to its surroundings, to the past, and to the future. And, likewise, the aim is to see things as they are,—not accepting untrustworthy statements, not failing to scrutinize the sources as to their character and competence, not reading into the period under consideration the conditions, aspirations and ideas of later times, but striving after the reality of truth, and endeavoring to interpret men and events by their own nature and circumstance.

This kind of thorough study is what is meant by the "critical" study of history. It follows many of the same principles which have been wrought out in the practice of the Law, where by long experiment lawyers have learned how to determine the value of human testimony and of circumstantial evidence; and in fact the trial of a case in court is an example of one kind of historical investigation. It follows in part the method of the natural sciences, where the existing facts, capable at the present time of examination by the instruments of the laboratory, are studied, and from them is elicited not only the composition of the substance, or the function and mode of activity of the organism, but also its history and origin, its relation to its environment, and even some knowledge of that environment itself. These



are, however, resemblances and not identities. In studying history, while some of the same principles, as well as the same ultimate aim of firmly established knowledge, hold good, the method of applying the principles necessarily depends on the nature of the subject studied. And within the field of history critical study will vary its method with the varying nature of the sources which are the material of its research. It will approach with one inquiry an ancient letter, an inscription with another, with still others a poem or an historical narrative.

Historical study is not critical by reason of any mysterious and magical power which it possesses, still less because of the character of the conclusions it reaches, whether confirmatory of tradition or revolutionary. Critical study of the past is characterized by one presupposition, namely, that the past can be understood, and by one rule, namely, to be thorough. This presupposition and this rule together confer upon it its right to be called critical.

First, as to the presupposition. A form of study which denies that the analogies of human life as we know it can be applied to the interpretation of the past, and refuses to permit an understanding of past thinkers through the forms

of our own consciousness, which limits knowledge to the chronicle of facts and discards the idea of tracing the connection and development of those facts,—such a study of the past may be productive of much learning, but it is not, and would not desire to be called, critical. A clear understanding of this distinction is chiefly important with regard to what is commonly called sacred history. There, it has often been held, the governing hand of God has exercised a unique control over the events, so that the actors in the history, and especially the prophets, whose domination of the history gives chief occasion for our interest in it, did not receive their ideas and ideals by a process of psychological mediation which the facts of our own consciousness and the consciousness of other ancient and modern men enable us to understand. This history then becomes not a chain of causes and effects, in which immanent divine forces have wrought out the purposes of God, but an inscrutable series of divine acts, which we may observe, but the processes of which we cannot expect to understand except as God may directly reveal knowledge of them to us. We can chronicle the external facts, but we may not presume to go behind them. We can trace the progress, we must not call it a development. We can

register the thought of Isaiah or of Paul; but we must not try to explain it, except by declaring it to have come by direct inspiration from on high. It will be observed that the distinction here drawn is not between a study of sacred history which admits and one which denies the possibility or the occurrence of miracles. A critical historian can hold a philosophy which enables him to accept miracles; he will treat them as ultimate facts, like any other ultimate facts with which he has to deal. To the thorough-going "non-critical" historian, however, everything is a miracle; all his facts are ultimate. Such a mode of conceiving history as this is, of course, at the present day seldom or never carried out to its logical conclusion. But the principles here indicated underlie, consciously or unconsciously, most of the sweeping attacks that are sometimes made on modern historical criticism as applied to the Biblical history. The critical method, however, has now gained such momentum that it has impressed itself even on those who oppose it, and it would hardly be possible today to make a constructive presentation of any portion even of sacred history which did not rest in part on the presuppositions of historical criticism.

Secondly, as to the ideal of thoroughness. By

this is meant the aim to use all sources of information, to test fearlessly their value without prepossession in favor of or against them, and to explore fully their significance for the history. To exhaust the sources is, happily, impossible. They will ever furnish new light, as the successive generations, with new points of view, know how to put new questions and so gain new and better answers. If critical study neglects any part of the evidence, whether archæological or literary, it thereby just so far becomes uncritical. If it shows a prejudice against the traditional view, it is untrue to its own principles. There can be no difference of opinion about the immediate aim of historical research. It is the knowledge of the truth. The conclusions will show differences, but these, except in so far as they depend on the fundamental difference of presupposition already discussed, will be mainly due to the meagreness of the evidence, to different judgments about the weight of this or that portion of it, to the varying estimate put by different minds on one or another process of delicate inference. Moreover, in the interpretation and grouping of the facts subjective points of view will always, and properly, find their place.

In the supremely important fields of the his-

tory of Israel and of the origin of Christianity the critical study of history has been pursued with noteworthy success. In the Old Testament the traditional representation of the course of Israelite history from Moses to the Exile has been shown to rest on a misapprehension, due to the transference of later conditions to the picture of an earlier age. Yet even from the legends of early times in Genesis much of authentic history preserved in strange forms has been rescued, while in the later period such records have been identified and such literary monuments of prophetic words preserved that a clear notion of the gradual and continuous development of Hebrew religious thought can be formed. The main results of Old Testament investigation are now assured, and, although countless minor points await determination, the history of Israel, as now understood by critical scholarship, can claim acceptance as tested and known. It is received not only by believers in the Bible but by all serious students of history as deserving the same kind of credence as the history of Athens or of England.

In the New Testament the present situation of critical study is in one respect different. Here, as in the kindred subject of early Church his-

tory, which relates to the period immediately succeeding New Testament times, good progress has, indeed, been made. The secular historian no longer finds himself in a strange world when he ventures across the line into the domain of sacred history. His own tests can be and have been applied. He sees the regular use of the same canons of criticism which he himself wields, to determine the age and genuineness of documents and to estimate the worth of historical statements. And by the use of these critical methods many fixed points have been established; in many questions the student finds firm ground under his feet. But in the New Testament we are dealing with a very brief period of time, in which very exact determination of dates and authors is demanded, and very detailed statements of the course of events need to be made. In the nature of the case it is harder to arrive at these with certainty than it is to see and portray the broad sweep of centuries. In all ancient history many matters have to be left with a question mark. In New Testament history the completeness and minuteness desired in our knowledge often tends to give a false impression that an unduly large proportion of the history is still in doubt. This impression is perhaps the more wide-spread because of the full blaze of

publicity in which critical study of the New Testament has to be pursued. In the history of Greece, or of the origins of Buddhism, only the final results, not the critical processes, are brought before the general reader.

The task before the New Testament scholar is to learn, first, what is certain, then what are the divergent possibilities and how great the margin of doubt with regard to the uncertain. Progress is surely before us, to be attained by the application to the evidence of more thorough criticism, by greater ingenuity in detecting the meaning of the phenomena, and especially by drawing upon a wider knowledge and experience. The better knowledge now becoming available of the background of late Jewish thought which lies behind the ideas of Jesus Christ and the theology of the Apostle Paul is one means of bringing new light to bear on New Testament problems. A deeper knowledge of the Greek world into which Christianity came, its language, its religion, its life, is another. Palestinian customs, Jewish apocalypses, Philo, the Septuagint, Greek religion and philosophy, the freshly examined and tested utterances of the Church Fathers, and truer notions of religious psychology, modern as well as ancient, all these can contribute to that body of

learning from which will come new points of view and better answers to our questions about the New Testament history.

In all historical work there are two processes, the determination of the facts and the interpretation of those facts in their relation to one another and in their inner meaning. The results which have already been reached lead to the hope that in the determination of the facts a good amount of ultimate agreement among scholars may be attained. The situation in this respect is already far different from what it was one hundred years or seventy-five years ago. But in the interpretation of the facts there must always be differences, corresponding to the different philosophical, religious, or historical modes of thought of different students. Such differences in any branch of history are only the sign of healthy life, and are sure to continue as current experience leads men to dwell now more on this and now on that side of the life of past ages.

The history of the New Testament period falls into two sections, the Life of Christ, and the Apostolic Age. In the former of these divisions, the work of scholars has led to a measure of solid result. The relations of the sources and their limits of possible date are now well made out.

The historical existence of Jesus Christ, and many facts concerning his life and teachings are firmly held by all sane critics. In understanding the meaning and purpose of his sayings and especially of his parables great progress has been made. That he wrought cures upon sick persons and those who were believed to be possessed by demons is generally believed. All this is the result of modern criticism. It must, however, be admitted that with regard to the life of Christ there is still great diversity of opinion. Are the narratives of the birth of Jesus legendary? What were the actual events and experiences which gave his disciples their conviction of his resurrection? What did Jesus do on the occasion when the storm on the Lake abated as suddenly as it had arisen? Such questions are still warmly disputed. And more general problems are yet unsolved. Did Jesus himself claim to be the Messiah of Israel? What did he mean by the Kingdom of God, that phrase so often on his lips? Did he really call himself the Son of Man, and what did he mean by the title? And the great questions, was his thought mainly ethical or mainly apocalyptic? or was it an attempt to set forth ethical and religious principles in apocalyptic terms? Was he an enthusiast or a plain and

rational teacher of sober truth? How shall we think of his self-consciousness? What did he aim to do? All these questions obviously relate not at all to the theological interpretation of Jesus' life and death and person, but solely to the historical apprehension of them. They are matters which we should have known about if we had been present, or about which we could have asked the Master if we had been among the company of his disciples. Whether our inquiries on these points would have been comprehensible is another question, for the difficulty of answering some of these questions springs from the modernness of the presuppositions by the aid of which they are framed. The progress of knowledge here will come largely through greater skill in putting questions such that the sources will enable us to answer them.

In regard to some of these matters there has, to be sure, been progress in knowledge. But in these questions, primarily historical as they are in their motive and form, ultimate agreement is sure to be checked by the interplay of differences of personal belief concerning Jesus Christ. In many of these things demonstration is, and probably always will be, out of the question, and while the literary questions of the date, nature,

and purpose of the Gospels may be settled within generally acknowledged limits, such an agreement will not settle the further and more vital questions of historical criticism. In the criticism of the historical statements the fact that the main sources all go back to the common tradition of the earliest Church, so that wholly independent testimony from two sides to the same events is seldom to be had, will for long, if not always, cause the final decision to be partly on subjective grounds. That is to say, if we ask what facts of the life of Christ are fully demonstrable by the methods of historical criticism and are therefore entirely sure to become accepted by all, we shall have to answer that such facts, while they exist and are supremely important, are but moderate in number, and that they are capable of supporting various interpretations of our Lord's person. The interpretations will differ with differing philosophies of human nature and of the universe, with differing attitudes toward the conceptions of ancient tradition, and with differing impressions made upon the individual soul by the general outlines of the character and teachings of Jesus Christ. And the varying interpretations of these known and accepted facts will in return, so far as we can see, necessarily control the judg-

ment of different students with regard to the other, undemonstrable, statements of the Gospels. Such of those statements will be accepted as a basis for historical construction as correspond to the general notion the mind has formed of what sort of a being Jesus of Nazareth was. Those will be rejected which are out of accord with the individual student's general conception. Learning and historical criticism can do much, and will do more and more, to prepare the way, by widening the range of the probable, or, on the other hand, reducing the number of open possibilities, and by illuminating the background, but in the final conclusion personal conviction will throw its weight into the delicately-balanced scales.

There is another reason why differences of opinion with regard to the life of Christ are likely to continue, namely the impossibility of fully fathoming the great and divine nature which spake as never man spake, and whose power and characteristics can be fully known only by the observation of its effect on this world. Our psychology fails before the task, and yet it must ever anew be attempted.

When we turn from the problems of the Life of Christ to the Apostolic Age we find a different situation. Our sources are indeed meagre, but

at least some of them are certainly of first-hand quality, and the thorough investigations of modern criticism have made it possible to use these with confidence and fruitfulness. Cautious inference from later conditions, new insight given by slight but important hints, a deeper and broader knowledge in many fields have added to our resources. Moreover we are dealing with a world many parts of which we well understand, with the actions and thoughts of men whom we may expect to comprehend through the analogy of our own and others' minds, men who were engaged in work for which analogies exist in the history of other times. For all these reasons a solid body of critically ascertained knowledge would be expected in the history of the apostolic age. And it is becoming increasingly apparent that such is to be had. The process by which this result has been and is being reached will be a subject of our inquiry. The progress in historical criticism over the situation seventy-five years ago is enormous, not so much in the bare facts affirmed as rather in the solid critical foundations of the affirmations, in the better apprehension of the significance and mutual relation of the facts, and in the filling in of many details through patient and critical study of the

sources. The gain from this to the student of later periods of early Church history can hardly be overestimated.

But the importance of the apostolic age has not been due to its significance for the mere student of history. The apostolic age has always been held to have a significance for the Christian Church; a narrative of the events of apostolic history stands beside the Gospels in the canon; the letters of an apostle to his friends constitute a quarter of the New Testament. What is this significance?

The answer to this question will depend on our conception of authority and of development. If Christianity presents itself to us as an authoritative religion, to which we as loyal Christians must subject ourselves, we shall have to inquire, What is this religion, in its teaching, worship, organization? We would practise it; where shall we find it in its purity and perfection? The obvious answer is, in the apostolic age, when little time had elapsed for external influences to introduce elements foreign to the Christian spirit, or for inner seeds of corruption to produce degeneracy. In that age, still fresh with the recollection of the Founder's life and under the direct impression of his spirit, we should expect to

find pure and essential Christianity. Such was the view of the Puritans, and in accordance with this theory they attempted to reproduce the theology, the forms of worship, the church-organization of the apostolic age and honestly to follow it wherever it should lead. In spite of the impossibility which will always meet such an attempt to restore a past phase of life the Puritans' strenuous endeavor was in many individual points crowned with success. Their commonwealth was not the apostolic age over again, but it was much more like the apostolic age than was the mediæval Church against which they protested.

On the other side, however, a more than plausible defense was set up by the aid of the principle of development. Christianity, it was said, may have existed in purity in the first age, but its perfection was not presented in the world until the forces innate within it had had an opportunity to work themselves out, and fulfil their promise and potency. This development is to be seen fully accomplished by the third and fourth centuries, when organization, liturgy, and doctrine were complete, and the demoralization of the middle ages had not yet supervened. The church of Cyprian in the third century, and the theology of

Nicæa in the fourth, present,—said the Anglican,—better models than the meagre and undeveloped type of the days of Peter and Paul.

The Puritan had the best of this argument, for what was not present in the apostolic age cannot be essential to the Christianity of any age, and further the study of history has made it more and more plain that the Christianity of the third and fourth centuries was not solely the natural flowering of the inner spirit of Christianity itself. In fact, however, both Puritan and churchman followed much the same method. Each—if we take each party at its best—was aiming to secure the interests of true religion, not to establish a museum of antiquities. Each seized upon that type of thought and expression which for him most contributed to the ideal. The Puritan was hindered by the forms and customs and by some parts of the theology of the Church. The churchman's sincere pursuit of spiritual religion was aided by them. Each found means to justify from history the type of church which he knew to be in harmony with his own inner needs. Both Puritan and churchman held to authority. Their choice of what authority to follow in order to promote the ideal which both cherished was determined by their differing types of mind.

For us to-day it has become apparent that the Puritan's argument against the churchman cuts deeper than he knew. If it holds against the authority of the third and fourth centuries, it holds likewise against the authority of the apostolic age itself. The more we learn, the more we see that the apostolic age cannot be reproduced to-day, for the reason that, like every other Christian age, it too presents Christianity in a form governed by conditions of place and time which are extraneous to the essence. There is in fact no such thing in the world as essence alone without form. We can make the abstraction in thought, but in a living world it has never been seen and never will be. The "co-efficients," as Harnack has called them, are always present, and serve to give body to the form to which they are attached. History is a continuous, although progressive, unity. Christianity itself is incomprehensible apart from the earlier revelation of God. Even the ideas of Jesus Christ must be studied in the light of the forms of Jewish thought with which they are intertwined. Extraneous influences, Jewish, Greek, Teutonic, oriental are shown by all historical inquiry to have been at work moulding the expression of Christianity in life and thought,

and some of them have been active from the very earliest days of Christian history.

The pursuit of the Puritan's interpretation of Protestantism will inevitably bring men to the rejection of the Puritan's own theory. Indeed, if God had intended men to follow as an authority any type of church thought or life or organization in the past, he would surely have provided them with a clear and complete account of that normative period. Such an account of the apostolic age we do not have. The instinct of the Catholic, working under the principle of authority, was right, although his argument was weak. He chose for his model not that period in which the details are hardest to determine, but one that presented in clear and mature shape a workable pattern to be copied, and then he defended it as well as he could. In fact, we must abandon the idea of authority in these matters. Neither the apostolic age nor any other period is a model. Christianity is not an archæological puzzle. The Christian life carries authority only as it offers a supreme and critical opportunity, and its expression in every age has to be different in order that Christianity may do its work in enlightening this dark world. For Wisdom is justified of all her children.

If, then, we do not look to the apostolic age any more than to any other period of Christian history to furnish a working model and an authoritative standard of theology, liturgy, polity, what is its significance? why our eager interest in it? Three reasons can be named.

First, only through understanding the apostolic age can the succeeding ages be understood. Its contribution to these made them largely what they were. The apostolic age was, and will ever be, the key of Christian history.

Secondly, the records of the origin of Christianity have come to us from the apostolic age, and can be understood only through a critical knowledge of the apostolic age.

Thirdly, in the apostolic age itself not only do we have an heroic age of the Christian Church, when great issues were at stake and great personalities in the field; we have exhibited there the first impression which Christianity left on the world, in thought and life. Even though it be not normative, it yet presents Christianity in relative purity, and for that reason possesses an undying significance for the Church. We do not find there essence without form, but we do find Christianity in its first estate before, for instance, it had used for its expression the full subtlety of

Greek philosophy; we see it before the masses of the pagan world had been converted and with all their peasants' conservatism had brought into the Church the pagan myths and pagan rites in which they had been reared. We know in Paul Christian thought before the savor of Judaism had evaporated, we see in the simple life of Christian Jerusalem and Christian Corinth how Christianity expressed itself before complexity of life called for elaborate organization, and before the Church began to think of ancient precedents as well as of current needs.

A word is needed about the limits which separate this period from previous and from later history. Its beginning was definite. When the body of disciples gathered itself together in Jerusalem after the Resurrection, the new epoch was there, the apostolic age had begun. Its close is not so distinctly marked. It must be held to continue through the life-time of the apostles, and to include the activity of the longest-lived among them, who probably lingered until near the turn of the century. Since the second century introduces us to a new spirit, which developed rapidly into the well-formed organism of the Old Catholic Church, perfect before the year 200, the dividing line would seem to fall about the year

100. But this is no absolute division. Something of the spirit of the later period is found before that date; many typical archaisms survived into the succeeding time. The apostolic age may be defined as the period in which the apostles lived and worked, beginning with the Resurrection, and continuing until men everywhere realized that the early enthusiastic days of origins were past, and that they were living permanently established as one (albeit the most important) element in the great world of civilization. The apostolic age is not so much a definite period of years as it is a type of Christian experience, to make clear the nature of which will be the purpose of our study.

Our knowledge of this period and the type of Christian experience which gave it its unity comes from a variety of sources. The only narrative account is the Book of Acts. This book, forming the sequel to the Gospel of Luke, with which it makes a single piece of historical literature, narrates some parts of the early history from about the year 30 down to the arrival of Paul in Rome about the year 60. Within the limited period covered the writer has evidently devoted much labor to the accumulation of his materials—how great the task must have been we shall not easily

over-estimate—and has presented them with great skill; but much that we should like to know is omitted and much that is less important is told with needless detail or with great diffuseness. The presentation is governed partly by the writer's interest in picturesque and heroic incidents, but still more by his understanding that the great fact in the history of Christianity has been its territorial expansion and its transference from the Jewish to the Greek world.

How trustworthy the tradition is, of which the earliest record comes from the last quarter of the second century, that the Book of Acts was written by Luke, a gentile travelling-companion and the beloved physician of Paul, can be determined only by the internal evidence of the book itself, and hence this tradition cannot be used to give credit to the statements of the book. The book was plainly written by a gentile, as every page testifies. Of the events which took place at Jerusalem and in Syria in the earliest years (approximately chapters i-xii with chapter xv) he knew only by information derived from others. That any part of his material here came to him in written form does not seem to me to have been as yet demonstrated, although it is by no means impossible. If the writer was Luke, he

went with Paul to Jerusalem and Cæsarea some twenty-five or thirty years after the death of Jesus, and would then have had good opportunity to gather information. In the later portions (chapters xiii and xiv and chapters xvi-xxviii) the occasional use of the first person ("we") shows either that the writer was present, and is drawing on his own recollection or journal, or else, what is perhaps less likely, that he has incorporated the memoirs of an eye-witness other than himself. In either case these portions present on their face a claim to be immediately derived from a participator in the events, and this claim is for the most part amply supported by the character of the narratives contained in these portions of the book. The final decision as to the Lucan authorship of Acts as a whole will turn largely on the question whether the book contains anywhere statements which a personal companion of Paul could not have written.

But already the larger question confronts us as to what confidence we may have that the pleasant narrative of Acts is true. The writer, as we have said, does not appear to have been present at Jerusalem with the earliest Christians; even in the latter half of the book only a small part is accredited by the presence of the person (whether the

author or another) whose own recollections are embodied in our book. Before many decades had passed after the probable date of Acts men wrote romances about the apostles; may not Acts be but the first of that unsatisfactory series?

These questions criticism has to face and answer. The application of the tests which are used in that process cannot here be illustrated in any detail. It belongs in the historical workshop, not to the finished product. In this essay the tests can only be described, but the use of them should underlie all that is said.

First of all it must be observed that the most satisfactory proof in such an inquiry is the agreement of two independent witnesses of whom at least one is already known to be competent. That will in most cases give practical certainty. In the Book of Acts something of this is secured through the statements and implications of the epistles of Paul. When one has satisfied himself that an epistle of Paul—as for instance that to the Galatians—is genuine, the statements which that epistle makes about matters of fact within Paul's personal knowledge will have to be accepted as true. The Book of Acts has plainly not used those epistles as the source of its statements. Accordingly we have here a test from a relatively independent

source of the accuracy of some statements in Acts. The most important point at which this test has to be applied in the criticism of Acts is at the account of the Conference, or Council, at Jerusalem described in the fifteenth chapter, and referred to at some length in the second chapter of Galatians. This comparison is one of the battle-grounds of New Testament criticism. The question has to be asked whether the account in Acts shows irreconcilable differences from the statements of Paul; and even if it does not, whether its obvious differences and omissions compel the conclusion that Acts was written with a partisan bias or tendency such as would lead to distortion of the truth of history. If such a bias can be proved here, the trustworthiness and credibility of Acts elsewhere will be seriously discredited. Paul's conversion is another matter of great importance where light is thrown on Acts by incidental references in the epistles.

Another test is secured by observing those statements or allusions in Acts which relate to facts of the Jewish or gentile world otherwise known to us. Both the presence or absence of positive errors and also the mode and frequency of allusion are here significant; for the well-bred guest in a strange house will be recognizable by

the difference between his correct but slightly constrained manner and the perfect freedom of the ordinary members of the household. Now Acts speaks of localities in Palestine, of the Temple at Jerusalem, of Jewish parties and government officers. It also refers with great abundance of detail to places and circumstances in Asia Minor, Greece, and even Italy. All these can be tested by the resources of Palestinian and classical archæology. If the author of Acts is found referring to all these things, which are widely scattered in the world and represent different civilizations, and if he can be shown to have made no mistakes, it will appear that he had good information at his command and used it faithfully. It may even seem probable that he was a contemporary and saw these things himself. It is evident that this is a general, not a complete, test. A writer's knowledge of Ephesus or Athens and the events of Paul's stay there does not give us an assurance that he is perfectly accurate in everything he says about the death of Ananias and Sapphira, but it will go far to determine our general attitude toward the writer or his sources. In point of fact this kind of study shows that for Palestine the writer of Acts had good but not perfectly accurate information about places and things. He

writes like a man who had perhaps visited that country once, as a foreigner, some years after the events he is describing. He is cautious in his allusions, and even so makes a few trifling mistakes. The frequent fulness of his narrative often suggests the labor of the literary artist rather than the detail of the eye-witness's photograph. On the other hand, of matters in the gentile world,—places, things, customs, institutions,—he writes with entire freedom of allusion and as one who knows of his own knowledge a world in which he is perfectly at home. Whether it is Lystra in Lycaonia or Ephesus or Philippi or Athens or Corinth or Malta or on board ship, he makes correct reference to the hundreds of facts involved with a sure touch and hardly a single mistake. And his references are found correct, not merely for the conditions which persisted to a later age, but for the special and rapidly changing conditions of the precise time in which Paul worked.

Besides these methods of testing general trustworthiness, direct tests have to be applied to the narrative as a whole and to its details. Does the whole course of the history hang together well and commend itself as a consistent and natural development from elements and forces which we can

suppose to have existed at the outset? Again, in detail, of each section similar questions must be asked. Is the incident self-consistent, appropriate in its place, free from incredible features? Does it contain what would elsewhere be set down as legendary embellishment, and, if so, are the peculiar conditions of this history sufficient to account for that? Likewise with regard both to the general portrayal of the period and to each individual section it must be asked whether the scene or the circumstance is one which a later age is likely to have read back into the history from its own conditions and ideals, or whether (in view of the changes which went on) it is such that it could not have occurred to the imagination of a later age to invent it. In a word, the ultimate task of historical criticism, in Acts as in any other book, is to show the extent to which it can be said that unless these facts had been actually remembered from the time when they occurred, these statements about them could not possibly have been made.

This last test is the most difficult to apply satisfactorily, for it is evident that the general prepossessions of the critic will necessarily give to his results a partly subjective character. In Acts it may be said that by its inner consistency, naturalness of development, and correspondence

with the whole situation, the general course of events narrated commends itself as probable, and that the individual incidents do not seem to be fictitious. In some instances, however, we find ourselves suspecting that incidents may be duplicated, or have received a wrong significance; and sometimes it may be that a growth of legend has attached itself to a real incident, for neither by the probable date of the book and the writer's sources of information, nor by any other available guarantee of accuracy is the possibility of some legendary growth excluded.

On the ultimate question of the trustworthiness of the Book of Acts opinions have varied from the extreme of skepticism, which has refused to use the book as a witness for anything except the state of mind of the author and his contemporaries, to a perfect trust in the infallibility of the letter. At present the tendency is to greater confidence in most of its statements. It approves itself not as infallible nor as equally trustworthy in all its parts, but yet as so good history that a discriminating use of it yields a solid body of critically sifted knowledge.

Fortunately, however, we are not restricted for our information to the Book of Acts. There are other sources which, when critically used, are

available for extending our view, so that we can have some considerable knowledge of matters of which Acts does not treat at all; and the history of the apostolic age nowadays includes many topics of large historical moment not brought to our attention by the author of Acts. From various scattered writers a very few historical statements have come down to us; but besides these we have the epistles of one of the great actors in the events, the Apostle Paul. The most important of these are beyond question genuine, and give vivid pictures of life and thought in the Christian churches of Paul's day. The other New Testament epistles are as yet less easy to date and to use. From the Gospels, which were written in our period and unconsciously reflect something of its problems and circumstances, not a little can be learned about it; the Gospel of John contains not only tradition of Jesus' life, but much of apostolic thought.

These are the direct sources. But upon this, as upon every other field of history, however small, light falls from many sides. From the thought and writings of the next following period of the Church many inferences may be drawn. Especially those Jewish and Greek worlds of thought and of outward affairs into which Chris-

tianity pushed itself, must be known, if we would understand the apostolic age. The increase in such knowledge is daily bringing better comprehension of facts and words. Almost every branch of knowledge,—philology, geography, even astronomy,—has its contribution to make to the problems of the subject. In detail they are endless, and sometimes seem hopeless. Yet, even now, if we do not make inordinate demands with reference to unimportant details, a fair general picture is attainable, in which as much confidence can be placed as would be justified in any other department of ancient history.

We shall need at every stage of our study to remember that a phenomenon like the Christian Church must be looked at in two ways, first, to see its external form, as it would have appeared to an observant outsider who might have had occasion to study it; secondly, to discover its character as seen from within, its fundamental motives, convictions, and aspirations. We do not fully understand that period unless we have adequate knowledge on both these sides. And again, from another point of view, we have to examine two aspects of the period and of each stage in it. We have to ask not only about its own individuality and how it differed from other periods, but

equally what it contributed to the next following stage.

I shall try so to sketch the apostolic age that it may be understood in these several respects. These men and women were like ourselves of flesh and blood. We must try to think of them as real, governed by human motives, thinking and acting like the human beings around us. They are not shadowy, though heroic, figures moving in a silent procession through a dimly-lighted scene. And yet they are not wholly like us. They had a background of ideas most of which we lack. They lacked many of the ruling conceptions of our thought. It is our task to reproduce this life as that of real men and at the same time to refrain from attributing to these our brethren that which belongs only to us late-comers in the human family. To withdraw ourselves from our modern ideas without transporting ourselves to an unearthly land of romance is difficult, but it must be attempted.

The general conception of the apostolic age from which the following chapters are written will become plain as we proceed. To the writer of the Book of Acts the essential fact in the apostolic age was that Christianity from being a Jewish sect had become a world-religion. He describes the life

of the Jewish sect, he shows the process of transition, he tells the story of repeated attempts to check the advance, and he lets us see the new religion at last established in the capital of the world. Now to us, as to this acute observer of the first century after Christ, this transition which he so emphasizes is still the most significant aspect of the period. But we can also observe that to the apostolic age belong two other transitions, which require to be recognized and understood, one at its beginning, the other marking its close. When the Jewish type of Christianity came into being, it was through a great initial transition, that, namely, from the life of immediate human intercourse with Jesus of Nazareth to that of membership in the Church of Christ, the Lord in heaven. And so likewise the conclusion of the age is marked by a third transition, that from the primitive and apostolic to the permanent, and what finally became the Catholic, form of Christian life. These three transitions make the scaffolding of our history.

We shall look first at the process by which Christianity spread, and at Jewish Christianity, with which our period begins. Thence we pass on to speak of the Apostle Paul, the eminent personality of the age, whose thought can be known directly

from his own writings. With Paul are naturally associated the gentile Christian churches, at once the medium in which he worked and the result of his life-work. They illustrate the prevailing character of Christianity in the apostolic age through the larger part of the world, and give us the stage which followed in direct succession upon Jewish Christianity. Besides Paul, however, there were other leaders at work in the apostolic age, notably Peter, and besides Paul's epistles other writings were produced, notably the Gospels. Further, in the various aspects of thought and life in the apostolic age we shall see the elements and tendencies forming from which grew the marked characteristics of the Catholic Christianity which is found essentially complete about one hundred years later, just before the end of the second century. Finally, no view of the apostolic age is complete which does not take some notice of the history of modern critical investigation.

II

THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

The first missionary preaching of Christianity was that of Jesus himself, who came into Galilee, as is described in the Gospel of Mark, announcing that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand, and calling upon men to repent in preparation for it. The method of his earlier ministry was to sound this cry as widely as possible. He refused to stay in Capernaum, where the exorcism of a demon had stirred popular interest, but went about to the other towns and villages of Galilee, that he might "preach there also." Before long we find him sending out his Twelve Disciples in pairs preaching "that men should repent." The latter part of his ministry was less occupied with this missionary activity, and more with the preparation of his disciples for their difficult task of maintaining his cause after his death. It may well be that many of the sayings of the Master inciting to missionary preaching or giving directions as to the method of the work come from this later

period of Jesus' ministry. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops." "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men." Sayings like these, re-enforced as they were, by the parables in which the gradual growth of the Kingdom of Heaven was set forth under the figure of mustard-seed or leaven or a field of grain, and supported by the whole impression of the activity of Jesus Christ himself, were enough to make the Christian Church into a missionary body. But these positive influences from the Master were also sustained by other motives. Deep in human nature lies the impulse from which the missionary enterprises of all the great religions have proceeded. With the Jews of the first century in particular this passion for proselytizing was conspicuous. And the Christians had a still stronger motive in their sincere national loyalty. Their heart's desire and supplication was for their kinsmen, who were Israelites, to whom God had given adoption, glory, covenants, law, ritual,

promises, the traditions of the patriarchs, the hope of a Messiah.[1] These must be won to accept the divinely offered salvation before the rapidly approaching end of all things should close in on the world and leave unsaved those who had rejected the Christ of God. Every spark of Jewish patriotism must have united with the other motives to make the first Christians into missionaries.

The missionary work of the Church began at Jerusalem, where were gathered those disciples whom the experiences of the Resurrection had recovered to a new faith. There is every reason to accept the representation of the Book of Acts that they occupied themselves from the first not only with their own pious exercises, but with attempts to gain recruits to their number from the Jews of the city. Their earliest missionary activity may well have been less public than the narrative of Acts conceived it. We can hardly think that the police authorities would have allowed the movement started by a leader now executed as a revolutionary criminal to put itself forward at once in full publicity, and to stir with great assemblies the life of the town. Yet, even though in quieter and, as it were, subterranean fashion, the missionary work proceeded, and the body of

[1] Rom. x. 1; ix. 3-5.

Christians grew. The figures given by Acts represent the impression of a later time, but are not impossible, and they testify at any rate to the recollection of a steady and large increase, sufficient to account for the great numbers of Christians who twenty-five or thirty years later lived at Jerusalem.[1]

The first step of importance outside Jerusalem was made, we are told, in consequence of a persecution which compelled the Christians to leave the city. Scattering into the country districts of Palestine, they everywhere carried with them the Gospel. Doubtless this spread of Christian faith through Judæa and Galilee and Samaria would in any case have come about with time; it was hastened by necessity, and Saul of Tarsus, the leader of the persecution, even while harrying the Church, rendered it his first service.

Of the character of Christian life at this time we can learn something from the collections of sayings of Jesus which, whatever their original purpose and occasion, were evidently compiled in order to furnish a kind of handbook of missionary practice for those times.

> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the gentiles,

[1] Acts xxi. 20.

and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give. Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food. And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. And as ye enter into the house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come unto it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my

> sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.
>
> And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.[1]

The picture needs no explanation or comment. The work has been well compared with the silent, rapid, pervasive spread of the Franciscan movement in its earlier years, when friend told friend and humble preachers set the good news forth to eager villagers, until the land was filled with men and women touched by the new spirit. Of

[1] Matthew x. 5-23, 28.

the same sort, and fed by even more intense earnestness and devoted concentration, we are to imagine the missionary work of the first Christians in Palestine.

Of the details of the outward course of this work we know comparatively little. The choice of recollections to be preserved in the Book of Acts is governed partly by the writer's purpose of showing the progress of the Christian religion into Samaritan territory, partly by the desire to record certain striking incidents and miracles. Besides the work in Samaria we hear of Christians and Christian work at Joppa and Lydda and elsewhere in the coast-plain, or "Sharon." The movement extended itself to Cæsarea, and to Galilee. It was so important at Damascus that Saul made a special journey thither to suppress it. Across the sea at Cyprus, north to Phœnicia, and even to the distant city of Antioch, the Corinth of the East, the missionaries went. How firmly Christianity was planted in these districts we cannot say. There must have been many scattered Christians, and there were some churches, but the main body of the Jewish population remained untouched. It was the great sorrow of early Christianity that the Jews as a whole found in the Cross a stumbling-block. We can still read the

pathetic disappointment in Paul's words,[1] and between the lines of the Gospels. The situation in later times seems to show that although Christians were scattered throughout Palestine, they were not numerous in the larger towns, and were still fewer in the country. Here and there was a Christian or a Christian family, but the main body of the new faith had its seat in Jerusalem, whither the scattered Christians had returned after the persecution. This was the result of the first fifteen years of Christian missions.

All this work was the natural extension of the religion with the same methods and led by the same motives which had governed the believers from the start. At Antioch in Syria there came a change, which the writer of Acts[2] with perfectly correct judgment perceives to have marked a great moment in the history of the Christian Church. Hitherto faith in Jesus as the Messiah had been propagated among Jews, with but rare exceptions. At Antioch gentiles were attracted by the new religion and became converts. In this event Christianity stepped forth at the third city of the world into the world's life. The occasion was accompanied by the creation of a new name, Chris-

[1] Rom. ix-xi.; II Cor. iii. 14, 15.

[2] Acts xi. 19-26.

tians, which their heathen neighbors now began to apply to the disciples. Already before this time the great persecutor of the churches had been converted to the faith of which he once made havoc, and now Paul became a leader in the Christian church which had just established itself at Antioch, while Antioch instead of Jerusalem became the starting-point of Christian missionary enterprise.

The change in the position of Christianity involved in the existence of a partly gentile church at Antioch, conscious of having an independent right beside the mother-church at Jerusalem, caused a great change in Christian missions. In what year this change took place we cannot tell, but the date must have been not far from 45 A. D. While the first fifteen years had been occupied mainly with quiet work in Palestine, the following ten or fifteen, from the beginning of Paul's missionary journeys to the time of his arrest at Jerusalem, were to see the establishment of Christianity at great centres of Asia Minor and Europe. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that we have here for the first time the Christian Church, as we have received it and know it.

With Paul at Antioch was Barnabas, like him a Jew. He had come from the island of Cyprus

and after spending some time at Jerusalem, where, doubtless, he became a Christian, was led to enter into the growing work in Antioch, and seems to have been the recognized leader there. These two, with John Mark, another Jew from Jerusalem, set out under the commission, and perhaps supported by the contributions, of the Christians in Antioch. The story of their journey is told with many picturesque incidents, and a lifelike freedom and accuracy of detail that can only come from direct and trustworthy information, in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Acts. The missionaries proceeded through Cyprus from east to west, with what success we do not know. Then they turned to the mainland of Asia Minor and (Mark having for some cause left them) visited a series of towns in Phrygia and Lycaonia,—Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe,—in which they found it possible to gather Christian churches. At Derbe they turned back, retraced their steps in Asia Minor, and so returned to the Syrian Antioch. How much time the journey occupied we are not told. If we may judge by the reasonable probabilities of the case, it cannot have been less than a year and a half, two summers and the intervening winter; it might well have been even longer.

The chief importance of this journey lay not

merely in the fact that several churches had been founded in territory hitherto unoccupied, from which Christianity might spread still farther. It was contained in the vast promise for the wider future given by this practical demonstration that the Gospel could find a ready hearing in the active commercial towns of the west and that the Greek world contained thousands of persons ready and eager for what Christianity had to offer. It has often been said, and truly, that Jesus Christ was born into the world only when the fulness of time had come. One element of the fulness of time lay in the development of ancient Hebrew and later Jewish religious thought, in which God had revealed himself to men and in consequence of which the life and teachings of Jesus Christ were possible. The other element was the condition of the Græco-Roman world, in which, and, so far as we can see, in it alone, the progress of the Gospel was possible. All the most important characteristics of the civilized world which conduced to the spread of Christianity are illustrated in this first journey of the apostles Barnabas and Paul. They used the opportunity afforded by Jewish synagogues, they found everywhere audiences who could be addressed in the Greek language, they enjoyed the protection of the Roman civil order

and profited by the ease and freedom of travel, and they found men eager to hear religious teaching. Let us glance at these aspects of the world.

In the first place the dispersion of the Jews throughout civilized countries had prepared the way. It is a mistake to think of the Babylonian captivity and other forcible deportations as the cause of this dispersion. Partly through such causes but largely by impulses acting within a prolific and enterprising race the world had become full of Jews. They had followed the lines of trade and settled at the main seats of industry; in some cases large migrations to newly founded cities had taken place on the special invitation of rulers who prized the Jewish traits of orderliness and thrift. Everywhere they had carried the Law and the Synagogue, so that, as the Book of Acts says, Moses from generations of old had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath. And not only did the Jews in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Africa, maintain on the whole their corporate individuality in the several towns, but they everywhere made successful attempts to win new adherents, proselytes, from the surrounding gentile population. To their synagogues Greek men, and especially Greek women, were attracted. The lofty

and rigorous moral precepts, the noble monotheism, the observance of the Sabbath, and the distinctions between clean and unclean food won large numbers of persons to adopt something of the Jewish religion. Some subjected themselves wholly to Jewish requirements, including circumcision, and so gained the advantage of the exemptions and political privileges of the Jews. Most, however, did not go so far, but remained in the class of half-conforming attendants at the Jewish services; "devout persons," "ones that worshipped God," these are called in the Book of Acts. Such persons Paul finds in every Jewish synagogue that he addresses, and their numbers are attested by the references of the Roman satirists. In this class, touched already by the ideas of Judaism, with which Christianity could make connection, but not bred to its exclusiveness nor finally and fully drawn into its circle, Christianity found at first its best field. It is going too far to say that in this early period no one, so far as we know, came into the Christian Church except by this door, but it is yet only an exaggeration of the facts.

The significance of this Jewish preparation of the Greek world to receive Christianity was greatly increased by the existence and wide circulation of

the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. From the Bible of the Jews, already in the hands even of many gentiles whom they addressed, the Christian preachers could show that the Scriptures testified of him whom they served. And in it they not only pointed to prophecy, now at last fulfilled, but they could use precious doctrine and moral precept. The existence of the Old Testament in Greek was a factor second to none in the preparation of the world for Christianity, and we are subject to-day to the consequences of it.

But this already brings us to a second element in Greek civilization which made the progress of Christianity possible, namely the Greek language. Those in every way most likely to become obedient to the Gospel lived in the towns, and there men spoke Greek. Now this tongue was not only by its origin fitted to express the ideas of Greeks, as was requisite for the language of Christianity; it had also been adapted, as we have seen, through the translation of the Old Testament and through several centuries of use by Jews to be the vehicle of Jewish thought. It thus contained in itself all that Christianity needed. Moreover, for Christian use, the language was at a fortunate stage in its history. It had become far simpler than ever before and easier for plain men, not highly

educated, to employ for literary purposes; and it was a language flexible and adaptable to the uses of new thought. In it Christianity could make itself comprehensible; for in it had been expressed all the past upon which Christianity stood, and yet as a living tongue it was capable of responding instantly and fully to the living spirit of the new faith. Without the Greek language it is hard to imagine the spread of Christianity through the world.

A third circumstance which assisted the rapid growth of Christianity was the existence of the Roman world. In it life and property were generally safe. Paul testifies in the Epistle to the Romans that the magistrate is a minister of God for good, and he repeatedly found this true in his own experience. The Roman Law, which has made the world one, was a protection to righteousness. Likewise the frequency of communication and the ease and comparative safety of travel were an indispensable gift to Christianity. There was no regular postal service and no railroad, but nevertheless it was easier then to cross Asia Minor or to go from Smyrna to Marseilles than it has been in the nineteenth century. Paul travelled almost incessantly, although not without some hardship and danger, for ten

years. Aquila and Priscilla came from Pontus on the Black Sea, went to Rome, then to Corinth, then to Ephesus, then probably back to Rome, where they seem to have resided when Paul wrote the sixteenth chapter of Romans. An ancient merchant from Hierapolis in Phrygia has perpetuated by his epitaph, which is still preserved,[1] the fact that he had made the long journey from his home to Rome seventy-two times. Not only did the good roads, the inns, the public conveyances, the police protection, make it possible for the great missionaries themselves to travel, and so to carry the Gospel throughout the world; but, by reason of the public habit of travelling, any large town like Ephesus or Corinth gave the missionary opportunity for contact with persons from neighboring as well as more distant places, and from such centres the Gospel spread, so to speak by its own expansive force, into the whole surrounding territory of Asia or Achaia.

But not only by its material provisions and on the external side did the Roman world contribute to the missionary work of Christianity. Equally through the spirit of cosmopolitanism which had been created and fostered in men's minds was the fundamental conception of a world religion, which

[1] *C. I. G.* 3920.

is a condition of great missionary activities, made possible. The sense of belonging to one great community had been aroused by the development first of a world-wide Hellenic civilization in the Greek empire of Alexander, then by the establishment of the Roman Empire, in which the Stoic ideal of a universal commonwealth, with all the wise as citizens, found its visible counterpart and expression. In this world it was easy to frame the grand conception of Christianity as the religion for the world. Even the short vista of future history which the theology of the earliest Christians permitted to open itself before them was long enough to allow a man like Paul to think of the unity of humanity in Jesus Christ its head, in whose name every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.

But the fourth and greatest advantage which the state of the civilized world gave to Christian missions, in fact the essential condition on which depended the spread of Christianity in the world, was the general and wide-spread sense of religious need. Christianity came into a world hungering and thirsting for spiritual religion. The mythologies were the play of men of letters, not the naïve faith of worshippers. The official religion of the Roman world was the worship of the Emperor,

and that was a purely secular function of the citizen. Popular superstition and magic, the votive offerings and crowded rites of the great temples were deep-rooted in the lives of the multitude; but side by side with this, philosophy had made moral teaching popular, the mysteries had directed men's thoughts to the immortality of the soul, oriental religions of Isis and Mithras and the rest had stimulated the taste for novelty and the desire for a spiritual union with God. The world was in a ferment, men knew that they were sinners, they had come to distrust ritual and sacrifice, they were looking within and upward, and what Judaism had partly given them Christianity offered with completeness. We are not to think of these Christian teachers as bringing religion to a world devoid of it. Without Christianity there would have been a powerful development of spiritual religion. Christianity took, moulded, guided, and was itself affected by the forces which it found already working in human life.

Into this world came the Christian missionaries. In Palestine, where we know but little of the details of the work, we are led to think of evangelization by quiet talk in homes and villages. In the outside world the method was different, at least in part. There the work was carried on partly by

men who gave up their whole lives to the calling, and were known as apostles, partly by persons not so called. Of the apostles we know most about Paul, but side by side with him were others bearing the same title, Peter, Barnabas, and many more, for the original use of the term did not limit it, as did later usage, to the twelve immediate disciples of Jesus Christ. These apostles and their fellow-workers laid the foundation. The most successful mode of missionary work seems to have been that systematically followed by Paul. He went uniformly to the important centres of commercial life, generally places where there were Jews. In such a place he would use the opportunity afforded by the synagogue to address the congregation of Jews and half-judaized gentiles there gathered. Out of that congregation a group of persons, attracted, held, and established in faith in Christ, formed the beginning of a church. They were from the gentile side, but here and there among them a Jew appeared. It speedily became necessary for them to separate themselves from their synagogue, and a Christian conventicle provided a centre of the new life, and a place for mutual edification and for influence on the people of the town. The active life of a Greek city brought many into contact with such an enterprise. From the pro-

vincial capital or the busy market-town the religion spread to the surrounding villages and province, and the method was plainly justified by its results.

What was the message which these apostles brought, which was repeated by those who heard and which found so surprising response in the hearts of thousands? Three speeches in the Book of Acts tell what a writer toward the end of the first century believed to be the appropriate mode of address to three varying types of audience at Antioch of Pisidia, at Lystra, at Athens. These speeches attributed to Paul are carefully adapted to the needs of these several occasions, and are highly instructive, whether they came from Paul or not. To the Jews the fulfilment of prophecy in Christ had been from the first the most effective approach, and likewise for those gentiles whom the preacher met in the synagogue the argument that in Christianity is to be found the flowering of Judaism must have had weight. But for gentiles the chief means of persuasion must always have been the positive contents of Christianity; and such speeches as those of Paul at Lystra and Athens and in particular a verse from I Thessalonians give us a trustworthy notion of what were the aspects of Christian truth that Paul emphasized

in a Greek city. "They themselves," he says, "report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come."[1] Monotheism, the service of the living and true God instead of idols; the Judgment, with the whole system of moral requirements which it implied; Jesus Christ raised from the dead to be the Lord in heaven, through faith in whom sin is forgiven and punishment averted;—these are the ideas which the Christian apostles found effective.

But how were these assertions proved? Not by arguments of philosophy, nor by a logic building laboriously on accepted premises; that would have been, as Paul says, to rely on persuasive words of wisdom. A strong impression was doubtless made by the report of the Resurrection appearances, given by men who had themselves been vouchsafed those strange experiences, but the main process of conviction and conversion was not one of argument and proof to the intellect, but "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." That is to say, Christianity did not present itself primarily

[1] I Thess. i. 9.

as a system of thought, but as a new, free life. Those to whom the privilege was offered could not, did not wish to, disprove the ideas on which this life rested. They were attracted by them; and they accepted the help which these ideas and this life gave. Many influences must have combined to touch one and another,—the admirable traits of character of the missionaries, the evidences, partly, as we shall see, physical, of what was believed to be divine power present with the Christians, the apparent fulfilment of prophecy, the interest and compelling power of the Gospel story of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Nearly all the elements of missionary success which we find later must have been present from the first. That the arguments should all seem to our critical view to be sound was not necessary. Arguments are always to a greater or less degree *ad hominem*, and have their effect precisely through partaking in the limitations of time and place. That the fundamental truth presented was true, that the life offered to eager men was real, that the arguments and commendations were honest, was all that was essential. If they still appeal to us, so much the better.

Once established by the missionaries, the work was carried on by the young churches themselves,

standing "as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Every body of Christians was a missionary church. Every assembly should expect and hope to be visited by the unbelieving outsider, who, when he hears the inspired Christian prophets "is judged, . . the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed."[1] See how anxiously Paul is concerned for just those qualities in his churches which are of critical importance to their missionary work. He exhorts not only to purity of life but also to those virtues of unity in thought and feeling, the lack of which has always, as in our own time, grievously hindered the progress of the Gospel. Be, he says, "of one accord, of one mind, doing nothing through faction"; "He that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. So then let us follow after things which make for peace."

Some of the aspects of a Christian church in the first century which made it a starting point of further missionary influence will come before us in a later chapter. The motives to missionary activity among these new gentile converts remained permanently strong. The commands of the Lord

[1] I Cor. xiv. 23ff.

were still repeated from mouth to mouth, the sense of high privilege and the desire to bring that privilege to friends and neighbors continued, the competition of religions in the seething human life of the first century was ever stimulating. And in the place of the Jew's loyal and passionate hope for the salvation of his nation, now entered the no less inspiring ideal of a world-embracing religion, matching the world-wide imperial civilization in which the men of that day were proud to have a share.

Of the first missionary journey outside of Syria I have spoken above. The further progress of Christian missions in the Roman Empire can be read in the ever fascinating pages of the Book of Acts. Beyond what is there communicated we know but little, and the story need not here be repeated. It is, however, instructive to ask what were the results of the missionary operations of the Christian Church for the two generations ending with the year 100? Of the geographical extension of Christianity we have considerable, though incomplete, knowledge. In Palestine there were in the year 100 many Christians, although the number was perhaps not rapidly increasing. East of the Jordan, the Christians of Jerusalem, who had fled before the capture of the city by

Titus in 70 A. D., had taken up their abode at Pella; there had been, and doubtless were still, Christians at Damascus, and we may assume that there were other groups of Christians in that region. Of the farthest East we know nothing. In northern Syria Antioch was a great centre of Christian activity and other churches existed. Phœnicia had churches. So had Cilicia, which belongs with Syria. In most of the provinces of Asia Minor there were flourishing churches. About fifteen of the chief towns are known to us by name as containing Christians, and these are evidently but a small part of the total. Macedonia and Achaia, as far as Corinth, contained important churches. Probably Crete and Epirus should be added to the list. In Italy there had long been Christians at Puteoli, while at Rome the movement was strong. There may have been believers in Spain, there must have been such, although we have scarcely any direct knowledge, in Alexandria. A look at the map will show how wide this distribution is in all the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

About the actual numbers of Christians we can say less. We have but few figures of any sort, and ancient statistics in general are reputed of but little value. According to the Book of Acts

there were about the year 60 many tens of thousands of Christians among the Jews of Palestine. In Rome Tacitus says that a vast multitude, *multitudo ingens,* of Christians were apprehended and punished under Nero. The situation depicted by Pliny in his letter to Trajan from Bithynia about the year 112, is near enough to our period for us to refer to its impressive picture of the influence of Christianity not only in towns but in villages and in the country. The people had turned to the new faith to such a degree that the temples were almost deserted, in many cases the sacred rites had for a long time been interrupted, and so few purchasers of animals for sacrifice appeared that the grazing industry, which provided these victims, was in distress.

If a comparison is desired, it is not unfair to compare the Christian world in the year 100 with the state of Japan, China, and India to-day. The period of missionary work had been not far from the same, and there was a permeation of the various provinces, here more, there less, not unlike in its various degrees to the various degrees in which at present Christianity has established itself in those countries of the Far East. The comparison is but a rough one, but it may be helpful. It should be said, however, that to an impartial ob-

server of the year 100 the prospects of Christianity would probably have seemed distinctly less good than they do to-day in Japan or even in China or India.

Let us turn again to the starting-point. One hundred and twenty persons, we are told, assembled themselves in Jerusalem to wait there for the coming of the Lord in glory,—faithful Jews who believed that the promise of God to their nation was now at last in promise of fulfilment. Seventy years later perhaps every one of those earliest disciples is dead; but the Jewish sect which they then formed has become a brotherhood of men of all classes spread through the world. Out of a simple addition to Jewish doctrine and the impulse of a new kind of life has grown the beginning of a system of theology. There have been great leaders, hard problems, acute situations, earnest thought, divergent views. The problems have not all appeared, much less been solved. The development does not begin to be complete or even mature in any direction. But good work has been done, and the first century and the apostolic age come to a close with their task completed. It was required of this age that it should by missions carry Christianity out into the great world, and that it should so conceive and hold and develop

Christian truth that this should be possible. To the changes which befell Christianity, and how they occurred, to the story of its leaders and its inner strains, its thought and its outer form, we must now turn.

III

JEWISH CHRISTIANITY AND ITS FATE

When we pass from the first three Gospels to the speeches of the Book of Acts or the epistles of Paul, we feel at once a great change. And the change is not due to the fact that the writer of Acts was a gentile or that Paul presents a comparatively late stage in the rapid development of the apostolic church. If we had literature from the earliest Jewish Christians it would stand with Paul, not with the Gospels. The contrast, which is so familiar that it does not need to be illustrated, fairly exemplifies in its general impression, though it does not in detail, the first great transition of which I have already spoken, the transition which created Jewish Christianity.

For three years the Twelve and the other constant companions of Jesus of Nazareth had lived in familiar, though reverent, daily intercourse with their Teacher. They had joined themselves to him like the pupils of a rabbi, they had gradually come to think that he was the promised



Messiah. They had heard from him and treasured in their memory countless sayings concerning the Kingdom of God, spoken both for encouragement to steadfastness and incitement to effort. They had been taught wherein lay the essence of the Law, and how to aim at a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees. They had heard with wondering and timid incredulity the announcement that the Son of Man, the Christ, must die in order to fulfill the Messiah's work, and that only by his death could the triumph of his cause and God's kingdom come. The substance of the message which they were commissioned to proclaim was, Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. How God would bring it in, or when, they knew not. More than all else they had observed the emphasis which Jesus put on the conception of God as his and all men's Father; and they had seen with their own eyes a life in which that conception had its perfect embodiment and realization.

There was here no new system of theological thought, but only the sowing of many pregnant seeds. There was no creation of a formal and inclusive society to carry on the same work, but only the transformation of the lives of a few men and women, to whom it could be left to work out any

organization and theology to which their transformed lives might lead. The supreme and daring trust of Jesus Christ in God is nowhere better seen than in the complete absence of any careful programme by which his followers could be guided in the outward forms of their common life. His trust has given his Church toil and care, but also freedom; it has saved it blood, misery, and permanent tyranny.

To this group of persons, loosely organized, externally unprepared to be a Church, but inwardly profoundly stirred, came the great catastrophe. In one exciting week almost every circumstance of their life was altered. They found themselves fugitives, their own lives perhaps in danger, their Messiah dead. Instead of the firm Will and clear Vision on which they had relied, trusting him to see the path before them, they had but a memory of his sayings.

The recovery from the shock came through the resurrection appearances of Christ. The mystery of these experiences historical criticism is not likely ever to penetrate fully. There can, however, be no doubt that the first disciples passed through real experiences which they believed to be the appearance to them of the crucified and risen Christ. This is demonstrated by the statement of

Paul, who included his own vision with these appearances, and by the unbroken agreement of the earliest Christians in this faith. There were real events, and their effect was momentous. It is not at all surprising, in view of the demoralized excitement of all the disciples in those days and of the mysterious nature of the experiences themselves, that the accounts, even the oldest, should vary widely from one another, and that it should be impossible for us to frame a complete or satisfactory narrative from the several statements of the evangelists and of Paul.

There is reason to believe that the disciples returned to Galilee immediately after the Crucifixion. Three courses were there open to them. They could give up their common undertaking, return to work at their homes as fishermen, live as well as they could in the spirit of Jesus' teaching about love and righteousness, and remember as a past dream their old hope that this "was he who should redeem Israel." From any such purpose as this, which would have brought some good men into several villages of Galilee, but would have put an end to the work of Jesus Christ on earth, they were deterred by the call of the appearances, which convinced them that Jesus had risen to heaven and should come again. The presupposi-

tions necessary for this faith lay in one of the previously existing Jewish conceptions of the Messiah. He had sometimes been pictured not as an earthly king but as a being coming with the clouds of heaven, in form like unto a Son of Man but destined to share in God's judgment of the world. Even with this conviction, however, which thus attached itself to those deeply-rooted ideas, two courses were still open to them. They might retire together to some sheltered spot, there cultivate the religious life apart from the dangers and temptations of the world, and so wait, determined that somewhere the Son of Man at his coming should find faith on the earth. On the other hand, a bolder course was still possible. They could return to Jerusalem, and, in full light of day, at that centre of Jewish hopes, where must ever be the capital of God's kingdom on earth, work to prepare for the return of the Lord in glory. The idea was not unknown among the Jews that the final resurrection would take place at Jerusalem, the souls of the faithful being transported thither from the ends of the earth. To Jerusalem were continually coming numbers of devout Jews from the Dispersion to end their days in the Holy City. The precise form which the impulse took and the particular shade of motive which led Peter and

the rest to return to Jerusalem we do not know. The general cause we can see, and it may even be that the desire as it lay in their own minds was inarticulate though compelling.

It is already apparent that in this whole step the passage is already made from the evangelical to the apostolic period. The step itself implies, it should be noted, as already in existence the firm belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Without that it would have been meaningless and, indeed, impossible. But that belief had been reached even during the Galilean ministry. The difference now lay in the conviction that these followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who was the Christ, could look to a Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. In that perception all material and temporal limitations were removed. This faith with all its privileges was possible at all times, in all places, for any man. It gave a new central object to religious thought, and it offered the possibility of the whole development of Christian theology. It has often been attempted to show that the Christian Church gradually deified its human founder and teacher after analogies to be found in many religions. That statement gives no true notion of the real process of the birth of Christian theology. It was in the sudden agitation of those few days

in Galilee, and apparently under the lead of Simon Peter that the decisive step was taken. Without that step the whole would have become but the happy dream of a few months, now ended by a rude awakening to the light of day. But the momentous step once taken, Jesus the Messiah once believed on as Lord in heaven, and the Church could not stop. What followed was not the gradual elevation of Jesus from humanity to deity; it was the gradual analysis of the problem set once for all at the outset, the slow definition of what was involved in this indefinite exaltation of the Messiah. The so-called logos-christology gave its aid, and at last the acute Greek mind wrought out to a logical issue the implication of each element in the apostolic conception. The battle was fought in the controversies of the fourth century, and reached its ecclesiastical settlement in the Nicene Creed, but the problem was fully set by the fishermen apostles when they turned their faces again toward Jerusalem. The next three centuries were only the application of philosophy and criticism to its solution. The writers of the earliest Christian histories followed a true instinct when they represented the Church as receiving its commission from the risen Christ. Whether or not any words were then

actually heard, whatever the real character of the appearances, it was in truth by these appearances that the body of disciples became in any proper sense a Church, a body conscious of its own independence because possessed of a faith whereby it was to conquer the world.

We have to think of the disciples returning to Jerusalem as mainly occupied with the expectation of the speedy coming back to earth of their Lord. Of that day and hour no man knew, nor angel, neither the Son; but that it should be within their own life-time, of that there was no doubt. They had been told with insistent repetition to watch and be alert for the coming of the Master. They were the Messiah's People, they must be ready to take their rightful place, the Twelve judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and each in his lot, when the great and notable Day of the Lord should come.

We shall not err in picturing to ourselves the thought of these disciples as perfectly naïve and realistic. This is the impression carefully instilled by the Gospels and the Book of Acts, and it is wholly in accord with all that we know or can suppose. Their intellectual horizon was limited, their modes and instruments of thought crude, but they carried in these earthen vessels

a precious treasure, and were worthy to be the founders of the Christian Church. For they possessed two things that the world did not have: first, the new spiritual life, led in humble dependence on God as Father, into which Jesus had brought them, and which they had seen in him and received from him; and secondly, the sublime and inspiring faith in Jesus Christ by which they lived, and by which they knew themselves to be the heirs of the ages. Herein they held the power to perpetuate Christianity so long as faith and hope should abide; herein was capacity for an endless continuity through all the changing forms which the unfolding course of Christian history was destined to produce.

The greatest crisis of all Christian history had now been passed, and the outcome was a small body of Jewish separatists, at first hardly over one hundred in number, dwelling as a sort of community in Jerusalem. Such sects were not unknown in Judaism. The Essenes were such a one, although not at Jerusalem. The Pharisees, too, were just such a sect within Judaism. These last were, indeed, in public influence and importance utterly unlike the weak and humble Christian Church, but in the Christians' claim that they alone truly represented the Israel of

God we have something much like the attitude of the powerful Pharisaic sect. From the point of view of the Jewish civil authorities there was doubtless reason enough to deem this new sect dangerous, but in the view of the Christians themselves they were full members of the commonwealth of Israel, rightfully present in their own Holy City, and naturally observing all the customs of pious Israelites. Yet even as a sect within Judaism they had a firm and sufficient principle of independent organic life, and their consciousness of their own permanent distinction from the unbelieving Jews must have grown with every development of their circumstances.

Our knowledge of the life and thought of these primitive Christians—primitive we may well think in more than one sense—is very limited. What we have comes partly from inferences as to what must have been the case in the given circumstances; partly from the traditions recorded in Acts, which are useful but less ample than they might at first appear; partly from hints in the epistles of Paul and in the Gospels. The evidence contained in the Gospels, although difficult to elicit, is important. It is to be found by observing what subjects most interested the Christians among whom these memories of the life

and teachings of Jesus were preserved and first formulated. An example of this method has already been given in the use of the Missionary Discourse as recorded by Matthew. Another example is the marked emphasis seen in the Gospels on the idea of the speedy Second Coming of Christ. This was evidently a main subject of reflection in the minds of those to whom we owe the tradition. And so in general by the choice they made of sayings to remember and transmit they put of necessity their own stamp on the Gospel tradition, and by that stamp betrayed something of themselves and their own thinking.

With regard to the historical value of the earlier chapters of Acts we must recognize that, as we have seen, these do not come to us directly from a member of the primitive Jewish community. The result of criticism, the methods of which have been somewhat described in a previous chapter, is to give a fair degree of confidence in the picture of the general development of events, while the detail seems in many cases to be merely a part of the telling of the story. The speeches of Peter which constitute a large part of these chapters would be a great aid in our task if we could be sure that they are more than the free composition of the writer of the book.

Unfortunately their style, their lack of the inimitable elements which could not have been the free invention of the author, their apparent purpose to present to the readers an agreeably varied (although curiously uniform) account of early Christian ideas, their close resemblance to the speech of Stephen and the first and longest speech of Paul (that at Antioch)—all these considerations make it more probable that the writer is here only following the general custom of ancient historians, made most famous by Thucydides, and giving us as a literary decoration of his narrative what Peter might naturally be supposed to have said. They cannot be used with any confidence as presenting distinctive ideas of Peter. And yet the author has shown great skill and dramatic sympathy in their composition, and in view of what we otherwise know, we may believe that these speeches give us in the main a not unfair notion of what Jewish Christians thought and preached. For the view that the speech of Stephen is based upon actual recollection communicated to our author, more can be said. But it shows throughout our author's literary style, and its present form is his. For a striking contrast to this whole type of speeches we have but to turn to the twentieth chapter of Acts and read the

speech of Paul to the elders at Miletus. By many marks of individuality and originality it arrests attention as the record of what someone, perhaps our author himself, actually heard on that occasion.

Upon the questions which arise about the details of the events with which the story in Acts begins we shall not linger. That a choice was made to fill the place of the traitor Judas in the board of twelve apostolic dignitaries is confirmed both by the fact that the names mentioned are otherwise unknown to us, and by Paul's references to "the Twelve" a few years later. More important than this event is the day of Pentecost. Exactly what took place on that day we cannot know, for the account as given us in Acts is probably an embellished form of the recollection of the Church. This account, however, could hardly have arisen at all unless there had been a momentous occasion, when under great spiritual excitement the Christians at Jerusalem became convinced that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit foretold by Joel and perhaps by John the Baptist, the mark of the new era, had come to pass. Through the experiences of that day the great change wrought by the resurrection appearances seems to have been confirmed, and from that day

onward the Church was able to stand forth with the bold confidence of an independent body. It has been suggested by some, and not without plausibility, that these experiences of the Day of Pentecost were the same which the Gospel of John has connected with the appearance of the risen Lord to the disciples on the very Sunday of the Resurrection.

> When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.[1]

In this symbolic account, as in Acts, the disciples are endued with the Holy Spirit, and so empowered are sent forth into the world.

Of the life of these earliest Christians after

[1] John xx. 19-23.

the Day of Pentecost the Book of Acts gives us the following description, a text to which the well-known incidents appended in Acts provide striking and instructive illustrations.

> **And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.**
>
> **And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.**[1]

This description is confirmed by all that we know and by what we can infer or suppose. The Christians had come to Jerusalem to wait for the coming of the Lord from heaven. Hence they mainly devoted themselves not to the ordinary occupations of life, buying and selling, marrying

[1] Acts ii. 42-47.

and giving in marriage, but, as was natural, to practices of the religious life, prayer, common meals, reflection, conference, discussion, and, we may add, the study of the Scriptures, for which a new Christian interpretation was speedily found. All these were the works of Jewish piety, and that these Christians were faithful and conscientious observers of the Jewish Law is attested by all our sources. In short, they lived as pious separatists of every age have done. The more well-to-do contributed constantly for the needs of the poorer, but there is abundant reason to believe that that was due to a generous and enthusiastic charity, and not to any fundamental principle of communistic organization. Works of healing, performed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and thus carrying on his ministry of healing, are reported to us, and we need not doubt that then, as at other times since in the world's history, such cures took place. That the members of the earliest Church included some only half-worthy persons is expressly stated. In one such case, whatever we may think of possible legendary growth in details, the startling death of the person or persons involved was believed to be God's direct punishment for signal meanness, and the incident was long remembered. It

is full of instruction for us to know that besides a Barnabas and a Stephen the earliest Church had its Ananias and Sapphira.

In their ideas these good people were fundamentally Jews, and Jews of a popular, semi-pharisaic, messianistic type. They had been trained, however, by Jesus Christ to emphasize the realities of Jewish thought and practice, and they preserved in memory some sayings of their Master which had a notably free tendency with regard to Jewish legal prescriptions. But we have no reason to think that they had at all changed their own personal habits from Jewish customary usage. To Jewish theology, as we have seen, they must, from the first, have added the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, that he had ascended to heaven, and would come again in glory. Beyond this their reflection had at least occupied itself with the prophecies of the Old Testament, and with what was ever to the Jews a stumbling-block, the pressing problem given by the crucifixion. Paul says in I Corinthians, "I delivered unto you first of all *that which also I received:* that Christ died *for our sins* according to the Scriptures."[1] It is evident that these earliest believers quickly came

[1] I Cor. xv. 3.

to recognize that the amazing and disconcerting fact of the Messiah's death could be adequately accounted for only by understanding it as the very means whereby his ministry was performed and the ransom for many paid. The Jewish Christians apparently conceived of the Cross as providing a means of salvation supplementary to the Law, the works of which, although required of all, were inadequate to secure the desired end. As to the other subjects of their thought besides the messiahship of Jesus, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the meaning of the crucifixion, it was doubtless largely occupied with the precepts and parables preserved for us in the first three Gospels and with the questions raised in apologetic discussion with their Jewish neighbors. They used the Aramaic language which Jesus himself employed. Unfortunately no literature (except the material of the Gospels) which comes with any certainty from these Jewish Christians has been handed down to us, and our own knowledge of the development of their thought must always remain imperfect and conjectural. They seem to have produced no great thinker, for Peter was gifted with flashes of inspired insight rather than with the power of creative thought.

The organization of the Jewish Christians was

doubtless such as suited the needs of the simple sect which I have described. The leader was Peter, whose native force of character and true devotion had regained for him the position from which his denial of his Lord might have been expected permanently to exclude him. His restoration to the confidence of the disciples is shadowed forth in the affecting and mysterious narrative appended as a twenty-first chapter to the Gospel of John. With him stood the rest of the Twelve. For certain special services in the administration of charity seven men were appointed. A little later we hear of presbyters, or elders. The Seven are probably not to be identified with the deacons of the gentile churches, and what relation they sustained to the elders is uncertain. That the hierarchical organization of the Catholic Church was due to the Jewish element in Christianity there is no reason to suppose; all that we hear of Jewish Christianity implies a loose and free organization.

The Christian Church is said to have been looked on with favor by the Jewish community around it by reason of the piety of the believers and the evidences of divine power among them. With the authorities from time to time there came difficulties. The leaders of the Church

were arrested and imprisoned, but were released. The grounds of the arrest seem to have been a charge of revolutionary and seditious utterance. This may have happened more than once. At last Stephen, a man of prominence among the Christians, was brought before the Sanhedrim, and in defiance of the limitations put by the Romans on the administration of criminal law in capital cases, at what must have been a moment of great weakness in the procurator's government, he was murdered. The touching simplicity of the narrative of his bloody end yields only to the story of the crucifixion in its moving power. His death was the signal for the general persecution led by Saul, then a young fanatic from among the Jews of the Dispersion.

Of Stephen's ideas we know only from the speech in the seventh chapter of Acts, which may possibly contain something remembered from the occasion and transmitted to the author from whose hand the speech in its present form comes to us. It has often been held that in this speech Stephen shows himself to have made progress away from Judaism toward such freedom from the Jewish Law as Paul afterward taught. "The Most High," he says, "dwelleth not in houses made with hands;" and he retorts upon his ac-

cusers, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye." But the former words are themselves taken in part from the Old Testament, and go no further than all Jews would have gone in the affirmation of spiritual monotheism; while in the attack on the Jews, who "received the law as it was ordained by angels and kept it not," he seems, as in the rest of his speech, merely to rest on the common position of early Christianity that not the unbelieving but only the believing and Christian Jews are the true people of God and the faithful and deserving heirs of the promises. The question of the abrogation of the Jewish law could hardly, it seems, arise, so long as all Christians were Jews and proud of their race and lineage.

The persecution, however, which began with the death of Stephen did have momentous consequences for the Christian Church. In the first place it increased the breach between this new sect of the Jews and the orthodox Jewish body, and showed that permanent harmony was not likely to ensue; and in the second place, as we have seen in the last chapter, it drove Christianity to wider fields of missionary activity, and at Antioch even beyond the bounds of the Jew-

ish nation. From this moment there came a new and impelling passion to the Christian Church further to extend its field. The Acts has preserved a few incidents, notable for one reason or another, and therefore remembered. They include accounts of the conversion to Christ of an Ethiopian high official, and a Roman centurion at Cæsarea named Cornelius, doubtless exceptional cases of the conversion of persons of gentile birth already more or less addicted to the Jewish religion. Objection has been taken to the stories, but hardly with reason, so far as the main fact in each case is concerned. These were isolated heralds of the great next stage,—gentile Christianity and the work of Paul, Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome.

At the same time with these beginnings of foreign extension Jewish Christianity in Palestine continued in its own course. After the conversion to Christ of the fire-eating Saul of Tarsus the persecution abated, and the disciples returned to Jerusalem. About the year 44 a brief time of sharp persecution is reported in which James the son of Zebedee, one of the Twelve, lost his life. At this time Peter—and perhaps others of the Twelve—undertook missionary work away from Jerusalem, and Peter's place as acknowledged leader was taken by James, the Lord's brother.

It may well be that with the springing up of gentile churches the conservative Christians who continued to breathe the somewhat stagnant religious air of the Jewish capital turned from these unforeseen innovations more and more tenaciously to the solid foundation of the Jewish Law. We are also told that the new-comers into the Church, who in any case had lacked the influence of Jesus Christ's free thought, were from the Pharisees. It is not improbable that the departure of Peter and Barnabas, and later Mark and Silas, from Jerusalem was partly occasioned by a growing closeness of atmosphere felt by the more liberal minds. At any rate the only glimpses we have of Christian life at Jerusalem after the persecution show an insistent party who maintained that the whole gentile Christian development was contrary to the truth. No man, they said, can belong to the people of God and expect to share in the salvation to be brought by God's Messiah, who does not conform to God's law, undergo circumcision, and live as a Jew. The Law, while not adequate to give salvation, is indispensable to salvation.

Of the earlier growth of this attitude we only know that, according to the Book of Acts, Peter once came under its censure, but that it did not

control the opinion of the majority of the Church at Jerusalem. Before long, however, somewhat after the establishment of gentile churches in Asia Minor, those who held this view took measures to put their conviction into effect at Antioch, the church where the liberal spirit was most conspicuous. Of the result we learn both from Acts and from the epistle of Paul to the Galatians.[1] It was a great crisis for the apostolic age and for Christian history. Fortunately for all after time the Judaizing emissaries encountered at Antioch an able, resolute, and clear-sighted opponent in the Apostle Paul. He fully recognized that such progress of Christianity in the world as he had already conceived,—extending through gentile countries, but yet not cut loose from the original city where centred the precious traditions of the life and death and resurrection of its Lord,—would be impossible if the narrower spirits won the day. In consequence of Paul's firm stand the conference of which we read in the fifteenth chapter of Acts took place at Jerusalem. The fate of Christianity hung on the result. If the leaders—James, Peter, and John—and the greater part of the church of Jerusalem had refused to countenance Paul's Gos-

[1] Acts xv. 1-35; Gal. ii. 1-10.

pel with its freedom from the Law for gentiles, we cannot suppose that Paul would have submitted to their wishes and preached circumcision and the Law. Nor can we suppose that he, upon whom a necessity was laid that he should preach the Gospel, would have spent the rest of his life making tents. But the unity of the Church would have been broken, the dangers of irresponsible speculation in distant lands without restraint from the traditions of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ the Head, would have been enormously increased, the fear which Paul expresses of practical shipwreck of his work would probably have been fulfilled. A Christian church excommunicated by the mother-church, knowing itself to be but a step-child, unable to make good its claim to continuity with the past, would probably have been a failure. What form the presentation to the world of pure spiritual religion would have taken we cannot know, but Christianity as we know it would never have come into being. Fortunately the balance turned the other way; the pillars of the church at Jerusalem recognized the gentile Christians as Christians indeed, and the day was saved, for Paul and for us. It is not likely, however, that any one of the three leaders on the Jewish side saw that the ulti-

mate abrogation of the Law for Jews as well as gentiles would be the outcome of the recognition then given to a manifest work of God.

From this time on, however, the Christians at Jerusalem seem to have grown more and more devoted to the observances of the Jewish religion. Before Paul went to Jerusalem for the last time he expressed, in writing to Rome, his apprehension as to the reception he might receive from his countrymen,[1] and we read in Acts that at that time the Christians of Judæa were many thousands in number and all zealous for the Law. James, their leader, is described by an early writer as a man of singular holiness after the Jewish pattern, a thorough Jewish ascetic, spending his life in prayer in the Temple. He himself recognized the legitimacy of Paul's work, and, so far as we know, always continued faithful to the attitude of approval of Paul which he shared with Peter and John at Jerusalem; but there were irreconcilables in his church, and of them we have to hear altogether too often in the epistles of Paul. At Antioch, in the churches of Galatia, at Corinth we find Judaizing emissaries, evidently bringing letters of recommendation from the church at Jerusalem and appeal-

[1] Rom. xv. 30-32.

ing to its authority, who try to undermine Paul's work by opposing his doctrine and attacking his person.

During Paul's lifetime these disturbers of the peace were not able to break the connection between the two branches of the Church, nor, so far as we know, permanently to withdraw any of Paul's churches from their loyal allegiance to him as their founder and father. Their purpose was doubtless entirely honest, they heartily believed that salvation could come only to those who obeyed the Law. The contest is highly interesting in two aspects. On the one hand it is the first of the long series of controversies between that type of Christianity which relies on external observances and sacraments as in themselves, so to speak physically, valid, and the inner and spiritual ideal of the higher forms of Christianity. This was the way in which Paul apprehended the struggle; and the same conflict is present with us in our own day. To the Judaizers, on the other hand, the significance of the conflict doubtless lay quite elsewhere. Their contentions were due to a sincere wish to maintain proper respect for the past and especially due regard for morals. They believed themselves to be fighting against an unregulated re-

ligiousness, bearing the name of freedom and liable to ethical laxity and perversion. At the present day many Protestants, at least, have learned to believe that Paul was right, with reference to each of these two aspects of the conflict. He was right, not only because he was defending the spiritual character of true religion as against religious materialism, but also because he was insisting on, and trusting, the living freedom of faith as against the strait-jacket of a code of morality.

But if these Judaizers were honest, they were none the less hateful. Paul's fierce irony and invective in II Corinthians and Galatians let us see how bitterly personal was their attack. "For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves; but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding." "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ." "Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ." They are Satan's ministers, "whose end shall be accord-

ing to their works." And to the Galatians, "I marvel," says Paul, "that ye are so quickly removing from him [*i.e.* God] that called you in the grace of Christ, unto a different Gospel." "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you?" "They compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ." "They desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh." "I would that they that unsettle you would even cut themselves off."

Besides the fierceness and sharpness of this contest which raged in the years of Paul's active missionary life, two facts are noteworthy in this connection. First, the reverence for the Church at Jerusalem and the Twelve which made possible the efforts of these teachers who came with letters of commendation from Jerusalem. The danger of their succeeding, the existence at Corinth of a party named after Peter, the concern of Paul about his reception at Jerusalem, his mode of referring to the Twelve both in I Corinthians and in II Corinthians all testify to this. And, secondly, still more significant is the fact that in every case Paul seems to have succeeded in checking these movements. With the progress of their enterprise, the Judaizers show less

of insistence on circumcision and the precepts of the Law, and devote themselves more exclusively to their personal attack on Paul and the effort to destroy his prestige and influence. The contrast between Galatians and II Corinthians is here striking and conclusive. Equally so is the corresponding circumstance that in Paul's later writings this controversy with Judaizing emissaries from the church at Jerusalem disappears. It was so by no means the controlling characteristic of the apostolic age. It was not even the exclusive occupation of Paul's own life and thoughts.

Jewish Christianity failed to dominate the growing Church throughout the world, and coincidently with this failure its importance in Christian history gradually diminished. For the gentile churches the controversy was but the averting of a dangerous but never victorious attack on their liberties; for Jewish Christianity it was a life and death struggle. When Jewish Christianity once suffered the loss of its leadership and control, its case was hopeless. In the year 70 Jerusalem was taken by Titus, the Temple burned, and the city, excepting a few towers and parts of the walls, razed to the ground. Some years before this James, the Christian leader, had been

put to death, on charges which are obscure to us, by the Sadducean authorities. Not long after that, the usual conditions of turbulence in Palestine were greatly aggravated; Jerusalem soon became a horrible scene of bloody partisan strife and mob violence; and at last the Christians—how many in number we do not know—withdrew from the Holy City, fled across the Jordan, and took up their residence in the gentile town of Pella. Without a centre, without any important general organization, without any great leader, Jewish Christianity as a distinctive power in the Christian Church came to its end. There continued to be Christians in Palestine. Some of these, like Hegesippus in the second century, entered wholly into sympathy with general church thought. Others maintained their national characteristics, and, like the similar bodies of Christian Jews in other parts of the world, were more or less well known to Christian writers for several centuries as Nazarene or Ebionite Christians. Cut off from the main Church, and treated as heretics, they gradually disappear from view. It seems almost like irony when about 150 A. D., eighty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr[1] actually apologizes for his own

[1] Dial. 47.



liberality in holding that some Christians who observe the institutions of Judaism can be saved. It marks the complete reduction of specific Jewish Christianity to the position of a half-tolerated sect.

Once later this sect came forward with a great literary product. Out of the Jewish Christian sect known as Elxaites there proceeded, possibly at the end of the second century, a religious romance from which the long and tedious literature still extant and known as the Clementine Homilies and Recognitions has grown. It is a glorification of Peter, in which Paul is perhaps not attacked but only ignored. It was widely read, but its theological importance and influence have been greatly exaggerated in modern times. These same Elxaites, however, have one channel of influence which holds strong to-day. In one of their communities dwelt for a time in the sixth century Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, and from this sect Mohammedanism seems to have derived its strange Christian and Jewish elements. There could scarcely be a better illustration of how Jewish Christianity, divorced from the vigorous life of the active world, was tossed, degenerate, into the mixed pot of oriental religious syncretism.

Jewish Christianity was the first stage in the history of the Christian Church, and as such it completed its work and passed away. In its character of a Jewish sect of simple "poor men," occupied in combining Jewish religious observances with the literal fulfilment of the precepts of Jesus, it was the necessary passage from the days of Jesus' ministry to the long years of work in the world, of theological dispute, of public influence, of fiery trial and final triumph. But the Christians among the Jews tried to preserve their character as Jewish Christians in opposition to the irrepressible inner impulse of Christianity to offer itself to the world and to venture into the surging sea of the world's life. Therewith they became a body of reactionary conservatives within the Christian Church, instead of being merely the advanced progressives of the Jewish nation, and from that moment Jewish Christianity was an anachronism, and its healthy and vigorous life was past; the living organism had become a fossil.

But although Jewish Christianity thus resigned its place to a type of Christianity that knew better how to apprehend the essential and neglect the encumbering, it had yet made already its own primary contribution to Christian history



and Christian thought. Many are the ways by which Jewish influences came into Christian thought,—through the Jew Paul, through Jews converted in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and Alexandria, through Jewish ideas spread through the world. But all these are far less significant than those fundamental possessions which Christianity had from the start, which gentile Christianity derived from Jewish Christianity, and which the Christian Church could not have had if the life of Christ had been injected by itself into the gentile world. We may mention some of these things which we owe to Jewish Christianity. First, we must name the tradition of the life of Jesus contained in the Gospels; secondly, the idea of the Messiah, and the whole theological system which it implies, together with the notions of faith, salvation, and vicarious suffering; third, the apocalyptic spirit, which is the spirit of assured confidence in the triumph of God's cause, and is indispensable; fourth, the Old Testament. Christianity could have existed without some, possibly without any, of these. It could not have been what it is, it is hard to see how it could have long survived, without all of them.

IV

THE APOSTLE PAUL

Of one individual man in the apostolic age we are able to have direct personal knowledge, and it is by no accident that the Apostle Paul looms up as the greatest single figure in the records and traditions of Christianity in that period. The opportunity we have of acquaintance with him is, indeed, partly due to his rare power of self-expression and delight in it. But it is also, and in no less measure, due to the real greatness of the man, without which the expressions of himself would not have been called forth, would not have been interesting to his contemporaries, and would not have been preserved for us. Of our only narrative of events in the apostolic age, the Book of Acts, Paul is the chief and undisputed hero; of the impression left by his personality on the generation immediately succeeding the apostolic age we have evidence in the words of Ignatius and of Polycarp within fifty or sixty years of his death, as



well as from Clement, who, writing at Rome about the year 95, speaks of Paul as one who "gained the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world."

For Paul's continued influence we have but to think of the inclusion of his writings in the canon of Scripture, and of the early attribution to his words of the full inspiration of God implied thereby. And if it be said that the Catholic Church through the longer period of its history has honored his name without appropriating the substance of his thought, we have but to look at the great influences which have formed the religion of northern Europe and to-day rule there and on the continent of North America and in the budding Christianity of eastern Asia to see that from the time when Martin Luther rediscovered—or, shall we say, first fully apprehended—the meaning of Paul to the present time, no interpretation of Jesus Christ has approached in power over the hearts and lives of men that which the epistles of Paul the Apostle offer us. To-day in spite of the remoteness of Paul's time, of his dependence on a background of thought and a view of the world which has disappeared, and of the repel-

lent strangeness of much of his method of thought and argument, we yet find the learned and critical scholar, the practical pastor, the simple and uneducated Christian alike drawing from this prismatic Paul, each in his own measure, guidance and inspiration.

The Apostle Paul was the great leader in the momentous transition which characterized the apostolic age, the transition from a prevailingly Jewish to a prevailingly gentile Christianity. Under his guidance Christianity was saved from atrophy and death, which threatened it if it remained confined in Palestine. At the same time, by reason of his insight into the truth of the Gospel and fidelity to it, as well as by his devotion to the Old Testament and loyalty to the highest Jewish ideals in which he had been reared, he saved Christianity from the moral and religious degeneracy to which it would surely have been brought if it had broken with its past, and had tried to stand alone and helpless amid the whirl of Greek religious movements of the first and second Christian centuries. In Paul a great force of onward movement and a profound and conscious radicalism were combined with fundamentally conservative principles.

Paul appears to have been born at not far



from the same time as Jesus Christ. His parents were residents of Tarsus in Cilicia, to which city there is reason to think that they had removed from the town of Gischala in northern Galilee. The father, like many Jews, had the privilege of Roman citizenship. This passed by inheritance to the son, and made him a freeman, with all the rights thereto appertaining, throughout the Roman empire. The parents were, however, not hellenized Jews who had abandoned the Aramaic language, and opened themselves to the influences and conformed in a measure to the customs of the Hellenic world in which they lived. They had retained the language and customs of Hebrews, and were Pharisees, as perhaps had been also Paul's grandfather. To their son they gave the name Saul, a name not uncommon among Jews of this period and recalling the great king of the tribe of Benjamin to which the family belonged. He must also as a Roman citizen have had a complete Roman name, with nomen, cognomen and praenomen; but of this only what appears to be the cognomen Paulus has come down to us. They also sent him to Jerusalem to be educated. The connection of the family with Jerusalem is further shown by the fact that Paul seems later to have had a sister married there,

whose son by his timely warning once saved the Apostle's life.

In Jerusalem the boy will have become acquainted with the Jewish common law by which the rabbis, like judicial authorities in all times, supplemented the ancient statutes. He will also have learned the rabbinical logic and dialectics, of which his epistles show him a master, and have addressed himself profoundly to the study of what we may call the theological system of his famous teacher, Gamaliel the elder. And he will doubtless have greatly deepened his knowledge of the Hebrew language and of the original text of the Hebrew Bible.

This Hebrew and rabbinical discipline appears to have combined with something of Greek education. Tarsus in the first century was an important university town, and it is especially noted concerning it that the men of learning were not imported from other places, but were natives of the city. The influence of Greek learning on Paul is not easy to measure. There is barely a quotation from any Greek writer in Paul's writings, and but little of the technical phrases or ideas of the Greek philosophy of his time. Of all this his epistles show no more than might have come to any intelligent man who

mingled in serious intercourse with men of the Greek world. In Paul's use of the Greek language, however, we seem to have clear evidence of early education. He uses Greek not like a foreigner who has acquired it in mature years, but with the ease and freedom of one born to its use. He does not indeed show literary and rhetorical training, but rather the power of a bright mind accustomed to elevated conversation and address, and filled with the language and ideas of the Greek translation of the Old Testament. For in this use of the Septuagint, including the Greek book of the Wisdom of Solomon, Paul seems again to betray an early acquaintance with Greek. He does not appear merely to be adapting himself here to the needs of his readers, but plainly is at home in the translation, preferring to use it rather than to make an independent translation for himself, and even following it in errors and obscurities. He frequently shows by his allusions that he has not only the quotation itself but the larger context in mind, while words and phrases and figures from the Greek Old Testament are woven into the very fabric of his sentences.

We may describe Paul, then, as an able and thoroughly trained Jew, who had gained from

his residence in a Greek city that degree of Greek education which complete familiarity with the Greek language and the habitual use of the Greek translation of the Scriptures could bring. At bottom he ever remained the Jew, in his feelings, his background of ideas, and his mode of thought, but he knew how to make tolerably intelligible to Greek readers the truths in which, as he came to believe, lay the satisfaction of their deepest needs.

At Jerusalem Paul entered ardently into the pursuit of the Pharisaic ideal of complete conformity in every particular to the Law. He was, he tells us, "found blameless" (to every eye but that of his own conscience), and, he says, "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." With fiery passion he entered into the persecution of the Christian sect, was present and took a kind of part at the murder of Stephen, and undertook to carry on the work of suppression outside of Palestine at Damascus, whither he journeyed for this purpose with letters of introduction from the authorities at Jerusalem.

At this time took place his conversion. That he was converted, and at or near Damascus, his



own words leave no doubt. "I persecuted," he says in writing to the Galatians, "the Church of God. . . . But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus."[1] The change evidently presented itself to Paul's mind as a direct divine interposition in his life. It came to him in a revelation of Jesus Christ, whereby (and through no human intermediary) he received the Gospel which he preached, and the commission to be an apostle. He refers to it as to a single event and an absolute change of direction, not a gradual process and development; the two parts of his life stood sharply contrasted, he did not conceive that he had slid by imperceptible stages from one to the other. "What things [*i.e.* his advantages of birth and Jewish attainment] were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ . . . for whom I suffered"—as if in a single moment—"the loss of all things."[2]

[1] Gal. i. 13-17.
[2] Phil. iii. 7, 8.

Moreover Paul connects his own experience, apparently at his conversion, with the appearances of the risen Lord which had converted the terrified disciples to a belief that their Master lived as Lord and Christ in heaven. In recounting the appearances he mentions that to himself as the latest in time but as entirely on a level with the others.[1] And in another place he affirms that he like other apostles has "seen Jesus our Lord."[2] From Paul's own words, then, we know that he was converted from a persecutor to a Christian, at a definite time and at or near Damascus, by what he considered to be the direct interposition of God; and it seems to be this experience of which he thought as a vision of the risen Christ.

The Book of Acts supplies us with three accounts of the conversion of Paul, thus testifying to the enormous importance which the author ascribed to this event. They differ slightly, but not enough to prove that they come from different written sources, nor on the other hand to throw any discredit on the writer's trustworthiness in reproducing what he had received. Paul, the fiery persecutor, approaching Damascus, sud-

[1] I Cor. xv. 4-8.
[2] I Cor. ix. 1.

denly sees in broad daylight a light from heaven of intolerable brightness, and hears a voice in the Aramaic language, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me." In answer to his question the supernatural being from whom the voice comes announces himself, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," and bids Paul complete his journey to Damascus, where he shall find Christian succor and counsel. The men with Paul were aware of a sudden and extraordinary happening of some sort, but, as we are expressly told, received nothing of the real meaning of the occurrence, not hearing the words. In brief, the account is that of a manifestation to Paul's inner sense, given in a flood of light and by the hearing of words, whereby Paul became satisfied that he had had intercourse with Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified malefactor. Paul was thereby convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead and was living in heavenly glory. This conviction was the same as that which, we have seen, brought about the regathering of the earliest disciples, and it would obviously be sufficient in itself to transform Paul from a persecutor to a believing disciple.

The account of Paul's conversion given in Acts with so much circumstantiality and em-



phasis has often been declared to be incredible. Those who are unwilling to see here a real manifestation of a divine being in visible form have commonly said that the narrative is merely the fanciful objective form given by the operation of later imagination to the fact that within Paul's soul, by a process of rational conviction, light dawned upon darkness. This explanation has never proved entirely satisfactory. The complete invention of nearly every element of the story, which it supposes, seems highly improbable, and to assume any degree of invention less than that affords no assistance, because the essence of the story lies in precisely those parts to which most exception is taken. But a broader knowledge of the facts of religious psychology shows that the account given in Acts is not without analogies in perfectly attested human experience. The vision of light, the belief that a voice of some kind has been heard, and the accompanying radical change in the man's soul,—of these we may read over and over again in the transparently honest statements of good men about their own experiences. In view of the testimonies which can be read in the books on conversion and on the description of religious experience the *a priori* objections of Biblical critics



of the last century lose their weight, and I can see no reason for denying that the narratives of Acts give the story of Paul's conversion substantially as he himself was conscious of having undergone it, and was in the habit of telling it. If that is true, perhaps the greatest historical difficulty in the Pauline half of the Book of Acts is removed.

It must, of course, be admitted, if this appeal is made to the analogy of other conversions, that the non-natural, or anti-natural, character of the conversion of Paul is abandoned. But that is by no means to deny the divine character of this great event. Alike in the unusual and unique, and in the usual and regular, and in all the grades between, the hand of God is to be seen by those who believe in God. And on the other hand, the mere fact of uniqueness is in no sense a guarantee that God has wrought the event. The evidence of that is to be found solely in the nature of the result produced. No Christian can doubt that in the conversion of Paul the cause of the Kingdom of God in this world passed a great crisis and received a vast increment of power.

Of the inner process which preceded and accompanied Paul's conversion we have what seems

to be an account in the seventh chapter of Romans, the famous chapter where Paul depicts the struggle of the higher and lower natures to possess the human soul, and with a truthfulness that appeals pathetically to the human nature of every age exposes the impotence of the unaided human will. Upon that wretched state of unfulfilled longing after righteousness he looked back as characterizing his life before conversion. And the main significance of the conversion itself appeared to him to have been the release from that state. We need however to remember that that was his later interpretation, and not to suppose that at the moment of his conversion he would have described it in precisely that way. Yet the chapter does surely reveal to us a man unhappy with the sense of sin from which no power that he knows can release him. Another hint is often thought to be given in the obscure words of a Greek proverb found in one account of the conversion, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." It may be that here, too, we see reflected some brooding and profound dissatisfaction which is hard to define more closely. But the essential change lay in the new belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Somehow, the difficulties of Paul's whole religious and



moral position gained such accumulation of force that by what seemed to him a miracle they were enabled to overpower and sweep away the sane barrier of his fundamental Jewish conviction, and so that view about Jesus established itself as true which had hitherto seemed to him equally impossible and startling. Out of the wreck of thought which this revolution caused, there emerged a lasting relief from the pricking spur and from the inner conflict; but it is important to distinguish the actual nature of the central change itself both from the dissatisfaction which may have been one of its causes, and from the unexpected blessings which issued from it.

After Paul's conversion, which took place in the latter part of the reign of Tiberius (14-37 A. D.), about fifteen years passed before the missionary career began of which we have knowledge from Acts and from Paul's own epistles. During this time Paul was first in Arabia, that is in some part of the empire of which Damascus was the most famous city, then in Damascus, and later, after a brief visit to Jerusalem, in Cilicia, doubtless at his old home Tarsus. In this period we may suppose that he was adjusting his whole system of thought to the new centre which had established itself in his mind, the Messiahship of



Jesus. With the new basis in mind every part of his intellectual world must have been thought through. Especially, we may believe, will he have studied the relation of Christian faith to the old dispensation and to the ideas of the prophets. The fruit of these years we have in the matured thought of the epistles. They show a steadiness of view and a readiness of resource in the use of the Old Testament, which testify to thorough work in the time of preparation. Epistles written years apart, like Galatians, Romans and Philippians, surprise us by their uniformity of thought and unstrained similarity of language, in spite of the richness and vivacity of Paul's thought and style. So, for the most part, the characteristic ideas even of Ephesians and Colossians are found suggested in germ in Corinthians and the earlier epistles. Paul's epistles represent the literary flowering of a mind prepared by years of study and reflection.

At Paul's first missionary journey and the beginning then made of churches in Asia Minor we have already looked in a previous chapter. After his return to Antioch followed that great and pivotal occasion of early Christian history, the so-called Council, or Conference, at Jeru-

salem, described in the fifteenth chapter of Acts and by Paul in the second chapter of Galatians. At that time Paul established his right to carry on the work of Christian missions in accordance with his own principles and his own understanding of the Christian religion. His relation with the Twelve Apostles seems then and at all times to have been cordial. His difficulties came from others in the Jewish Church. To this we know of only one exception, apparently somewhat later than the Conference, the occasion at Antioch when Peter under pressure from Jerusalem withdrew from fellowship with the gentile brethren, and called out from Paul the severe rebuke of which we read in Galatians. There is reason to believe that the rebuke accomplished its purpose. At any rate, at a later time there is no evidence of a continued breach.

The idea of missionary travel had evidently taken possession of Paul, for after returning from Jerusalem to Antioch he soon started out again, and was incessantly occupied with missionary work from now until the moment of his arrest at Jerusalem. Leaving Antioch on his second journey he and his companions hurried across Asia Minor, stopping only, it would appear, to revisit and inspect churches previously estab-



lished. They were led by the Holy Spirit, as the writer of Acts believed, to direct their course westward as rapidly as possible to Greece, which was to be the next stage in the path to the capital of the world. In Macedonia and Achaia Paul and his companions worked with varying success at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Athens, Corinth. At Corinth, the chief commercial city of Greece, the Christians arrived in the late autumn. The work opened well, and Paul remained at that important centre until a year from the following spring. The date of his arrival cannot be exactly determined, but is probably one of the five years between 49 and 53 A. D. While at Corinth he wrote the First and (if it is genuine) the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Somewhere about this time, perhaps before leaving Antioch for this journey, the Epistle to the Galatians was written. The churches of Galatia, to which it is addressed, were probably the churches known to us in Acts as Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

After a flying trip to Syria and perhaps to Jerusalem Paul returned to Ephesus in Asia Minor, where he settled down for a stay of three years. A few incidents of this period have been recorded in the Book of Acts, and are among

the most striking and realistic that we have. They include a remarkable number of points of contact with facts known to us from archæological discoveries, and in no chapters of Acts is our confidence more fully reassured in the contemporary knowledge and the trustworthiness of the writer of the book.

While at Ephesus Paul had much communication with Corinth, and wrote I Corinthians, which had clearly been preceded by another letter. There are indications in II Corinthians that after this he found the difficulties in the church at Corinth such that he wrote them at least one letter which has been lost, and made a short, and in its outcome exceedingly painful, trip to Corinth and back to Ephesus. Finally he was impelled by danger to his life to leave Ephesus, and went through Macedonia to Corinth. On the way he wrote, to prepare for his own presence, the epistle we call II Corinthians. Arriving at Corinth in the early winter he stayed until spring. His literary impulse continued active, and to this winter we owe the Epistle to the Romans. Earlier letters had been called out by special need in one or another church; in Romans Paul comes nearer to a systematic exposition of his theology than in any of his earlier writings. He knew

the importance that would surely belong to the Christian church of Rome. He had made up his mind to go there. But first he must go to Jerusalem, and there were dangers both from the risks of travel and from hostile men. Of each kind his life had had many examples. Accordingly he provided for the Roman Christians a clear statement of his main position, together with a reply to several of the chief objections brought against it, notably the allegations that his presentation of Christianity involve the abrogation of God's promises to his chosen people, and that it opened the way to moral laxity.

This letter Paul sent as an earnest of his own visit to Rome. He had been for a year or more supervising the collection by the churches of Asia Minor and Europe of a contribution for the poor Christians at Jerusalem; the gentile churches should thus make a repayment in carnal things to those who had made them to be partakers of their spiritual things. This contribution was now ready, and Paul himself with a group of representatives of the chief churches took ship at Philippi and Troas for Jerusalem. The voyage is narrated in detail in Acts, evidently by one who was a member of the company. At last Paul reached Jerusalem, and was well received



by the church; but, followed as he was by the hatred of Jews from the Dispersion who had recognized the menace to the Jewish religion proceeding from the new sect, he was set upon by a mob, rescued only by being taken in custody by the Roman authorities, and after a series of exciting adventures which will be found admirably told in the Book of Acts, was brought to Cæsarea. There he stayed a prisoner for two years and more until on the occasion of a change of Roman Governor his case was brought up for trial, when he exercised the right of a Roman citizen to appeal from the jurisdiction of the Governor to that of the imperial court at Rome.

It was late autumn, but he was despatched with a companion whom we may well believe to be Luke the beloved physician, and from whom our account certainly comes. The narrative of Paul's voyage and shipwreck, of the winter on the island of Malta, and the final arrival at Rome early in one of the years between 58 and 62 A. D. is familiar. It is the most important document that antiquity has left us for an understanding of the mode of working an ancient ship, while the picture which it gives of Paul as a practical man is a delightful supplement to our other knowledge of him.



In Rome, while under guard awaiting trial, Paul probably wrote Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and the circular letter, seemingly intended for churches in Asia Minor, known to us as Ephesians. They show some new development of ideas long present with him, and some new thoughts to which his other writings give no parallel, and the style of some of them has changed a bit from the freshness of Galatians and Romans; but these are not sufficient reasons for denying that Paul wrote the letters. They are, indeed, as it seems to me, beyond reasonable doubt genuine.

The Book of Acts ends with the words, "And he [Paul] abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him." This period of two years is sufficient to include the composition of the four epistles to which reference has just been made, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians, the so-called Epistles of the Captivity. What happened at the expiration of the period? Apparently Paul's case, long postponed, then came to trial. Did it result in his release or his execution? The evi-



dence is meagre and conflicting, and opinions differ. It is perhaps a little more likely that he was released, and entered on further missionary work, probably carrying out his original purpose of pushing on with the proclamation of his Gospel to the west, and establishing it in Spain. But of this period we have no narrative.

From such a time would have to proceed, if they were genuine, the two epistles to Timothy and that to Titus, making up the group known as the Pastoral Epistles. But many reasons combine to show that these documents are not genuine letters of Paul. The language and style as well as the main ideas, the impossible relation to Timothy and Titus (Paul's attitude and relations to whom we know from several of his earlier letters), all of this combines with the general situation which the letters presuppose, to show that we have here little treatises on elementary church-law, or primitive church-manuals, from the end of the apostolic age or later. That certain genuine Pauline fragments have been built into these manuals (particularly in the case of II Timothy), and show in occasional characteristic phrases and in greetings to particular persons the hand of Paul himself, is wholly in accord with the spirit of the earliest framers

of such literature as it is elsewhere known to us. There are abundant documents of this kind from the early centuries, many of which show this same tendency to ascribe the origin of the rules and counsels to apostles, and scarcely one has come down to us in its original form. The inclination is everywhere seen, just as in the treatment which has been systematically accorded to modern hymns, to adapt for this purpose an earlier document to current needs. The analogy of all this early literature goes far to confirm the results of critical investigation of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles.

If after two years Paul's imprisonment at Rome ended with his release, as the absence of well-founded charges against him would lead us to expect, he must have been later again apprehended, probably in connection with the persecution artfully turned against the Christians at the time of Nero's fire in July of the year 64. It is probable that he was beheaded, to which privilege his Roman citizenship entitled him, and that he was ultimately buried on the Ostian Way at the spot where now stands the splendid basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. The day on which the Church commemorates at once the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (June 29) is not

the day on which either of them died, but is perhaps the day on which at a later time Paul's body was removed from a temporary resting place in the Catacombs near S. Sebastiano on the Appian Way, where it had lain side by side with that of Peter, to the church on the Ostian Way. There is no sufficient reason for believing that Peter and Paul died on the same day.

We have traced the course of Paul's life, so far as it is known to us, from his birth, about the beginning of the Christian era, to his martyrdom, probably in the year 64. We must now try to describe the characteristics of this man. A knowledge of his temperament, character, and traits of mind is essential to a just understanding of his life and thought.

We have already seen how the Greek and the Hebrew were mingled in his birth and education. A correct discrimination of these elements will show, I believe, that Paul was always fundamentally the Jew, with whom what he knew of Greek ideas and habits of thought rested for the most part as a veneer on the surface or offered itself merely as a convenient tool. The witness of the Law and the Prophets was an integral part of his thought; in the wisdom of men he refused to partake. And yet Paul could

not possibly withdraw himself from the Greek world in which he lived. His epistles correspond curiously in structure to the private letters which every year brings us from their long burial in the sand of Egypt. He describes his Christian life in the language of the Greek games, with a course, an umpire, a contest, and a crown. Greek law, Greek household life, Greek religion, the citizens and the resident strangers of a city, the last will, the tutor, the sacrificial feast, all serve to illustrate the truths of Paul's doctrine. He draws a figure from the armor of the Roman soldier. Such ideas as conscience, nature, the mind, the body as an organism, the physiological relation of head to members as a metaphor for the relation of Christ to his Church—these and many other details which spring to Paul's eager mind are Greek, and would not be in his writings if he had not lived in daily association with Greeks. And in order to develop some of the remoter and sublimer consequences of his own thought of Christ, he was forced to use categories which become clear to us only through a knowledge of the Greek philosophy of Alexandria. His vocabulary cannot easily be rendered into Hebrew. The story of his intercourse and correspondence with Seneca is a fable, but the linea-



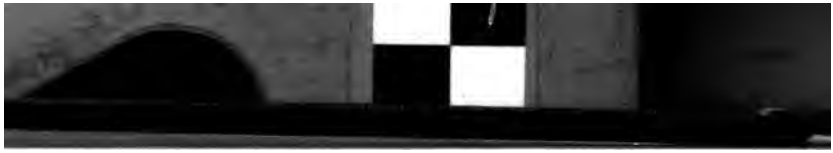
ments of the Stoic ideal wise man, earnestly practising himself in self-sufficiency, and the conception of an universal citizenship in a world-wide commonwealth have surely aided Paul to frame his expression of the very different ideal and aspiration of the Christian. But a Greek at heart he could never have become. The intellectual and speculative interest was lacking in him. He was no philosopher. He cared for life, not for abstract thought; and truth was for him valuable in proportion as it contributed to redeem man from captivity to sin and from impending doom.

In his personal traits as a man Paul appears as a warm and energetic, "zealous," intense, indeed passionate spirit. Fervor marked him both as a persecutor and a preacher of the Gospel. The first two chapters of Galatians were written in anger. "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another, only there are some that trouble you. . . . But if even we ourselves or an angel from heaven preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be damned." Such phrases as "the false brethren, smuggled in to spy out our liberty," and, in-

deed, the whole of that familiar passage betray the passion. A nature easily moved to intense feeling reveals itself throughout the epistles as he threatens, denounces, appeals, entreats, with tones that range from irony to the pathos of wounded love.

Yet to this passionate nature belongs the tempering force of excellent good sense. No one can read the practical directions which make up the greater part of I Corinthians and relate to marriage, to speaking with tongues, to the eating of meat that had been offered to idols, without observing how, in spite of certain mistaken views, wise, sagacious common sense controls Paul's judgment. The man who told the weary and panic-stricken ship's company anchored on a lee shore within sound of the breakers, that they must eat a good breakfast if they wanted to be saved, is the same man who could give sound advice to masters and slaves and who warned parents not to irritate their children for fear of making them sullen.

Corresponding to the warmth and passion of Paul's nature was his masterful spirit and his aristocratic attitude toward the world. He intends to control his churches. In Galatia, in Corinth, he demands rather than invites their loyalty.



He does not hesitate once and again to point them to his own example. "Be ye imitators of me." "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do." There might seem almost a touch of arrogance here. And indeed Paul is no cringing Shylock, but moves through the world a free citizen, looking to the constituted authorities as his support and protector, as existing in a measure for his sake.[1] Nay, he knows himself to belong to the blood royal of the world. Is he not of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews? and can he not proudly say of his people, as of none other in God's world, "Whose is the adoption and the shekinah and the covenants, and the legislation and the liturgy and the promises, to whom belong the patriarchs, and from whom arises the Messiah?"[2] This aristocratic trait in Paul is noteworthy, and its effect is to be observed in many ways in his thought and writings.

But as Paul's heat and passion were tempered by rare good sense, so again his masterful and aristocratic temper was matched by an admirable tenderness and a considerate, regardful tact. He

[1] Rom. xiii. 1-7.

[2] Rom. ix. 4, 5.



reminds the Galatians of their kindness in his sickness, and proceeds, "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you." He says to the Corinthians, "Whether we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comfort;" and again, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." And to the Philippians, "Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved." These are but a few out of many affectionate sentences in these letters.

With this tenderness belongs Paul's tact. It was his principle so to adapt his conduct in non-essentials as to give least offence to those for whom he labored. "To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain Jews. . . . I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."[1] Note the care with which in treating of the abuses of party division in Corinth he draws his illustration from the parties which had taken his own name and that of his friend Apollos, that he may not seem specially to criticise the less well-

[1] I Cor. ix. 20-22.

disposed.[1] See how tact and self-denial run into each other when he says, "Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many that they may be saved."[2] And read the Epistle to Philemon, where with supreme delicacy of feeling and much lightness of literary touch the runaway but penitent slave is commended to the Christian friend, his owner.

Of the many qualities of temperament revealed in Paul's letters which might be mentioned, these seem to me the most significant and illuminative. His was a temperament passionate but sensible, masterful, almost haughty, but tender and gifted with tact.

When we inquire into the main traits of Paul's mind, as distinguished from his temperament and character, I should name first of all his capacity as an organizer and administrator. Paul had a clear missionary policy. He aimed at large cities, containing a Jewish synagogue. From these he knew that the Gospel would make its way into the smaller places and the outlying country. He began with Asia Minor, then planted his churches at centres in Macedonia and Greece, then looked beyond to Rome, and conceived the hope of reaching

[1] I Cor. iii. 4-6; iv. 6.
[2] I Cor. x. 33.



the Pillars of Hercules. And he not only understood method in evangelism, but he clearly apprehended the significance of unity. His earnest efforts were given to maintaining the unity of the faith, and securing that each several structure fitly framed together with the rest should grow into one holy temple. But we nowhere read of an external unity of organization; Paul fully understood that the only valuable unity is unity in Christ, a unity not of form but of feeling, whereby the increase of the body is unto the building up of itself in love.

On a different side one of the most marked traits of Paul's mind was his interest and success in observing the workings of the human soul. He knew men, by a power of direct insight into human character, using often as interpreter his own consciousness. The arraignment of Jewish insincerity in the second chapter of Romans, "If thou . . . art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, . . . thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" or the famous analysis of the never ending moral conflict whereby for ever until help comes, "not what I would that do I practise, but what I hate, that I do,"



will illustrate this. But equally is it seen in his practical advice and exhortation. Paul knew the human heart, its tendencies and its possibilities. He sees where the strain must be relieved, as in the directions about marriage: he understands when a motive—gratitude, or pride, or the sense of responsibility—can be evoked to do the work that needs to be done in the man's moral progress.

And it is not out of accord with this quality if the third characteristic of Paul's mind to be mentioned is that of the poet. No formal verse, but a noble rhetoric of nature makes a fit vehicle of expression for Paul's higher flights. The hymn to love in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians is a classic of literature, and it stands by no means isolated in Paul's Epistles. Take the vast sweep with which in the eighth chapter of Romans his mind sees the whole creation sharing in the fall and redemption of the world, groaning and travailing, as it waits for the revelation of the sons of God. The thought was not new, but where is the picture of the whole process so vividly conceived and so grandly and sonorously expressed? Or the opening of the Epistle to the Ephesians, with its refrain "to the praise of his glory," and its long vista of the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will,—what is

this but a great and solemn poem which celebrates the grace of God and the joy of those who know themselves to belong to Him? At every moment of exalted feeling Paul's vision is clarified and his utterance becomes true poetry. Listen to his triumphant cry, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the Law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

For it is as the man of human insight, the mystic, the poet, not as the theologian—which he was not—that we must read and understand Paul. He rose to visions, he had intuitions, he knew. If he argued, it was not in order to arrive at the truth but to persuade his reader of truth already apprehended by other means than dialectics. Here lay his genius, and the source of his power. Has ever a man been so misunderstood and shamefully entreated as Paul, out of whose poetry men have made the propositions of a logical system? No theologian but everywhere a Christian was Paul. His faith in Christ and sense of union with



Christ transformed his world. His hope is "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." In these words the source of the poetical inspiration is made clear. Without his Christian faith we should have found Paul an interesting, devoted, and conscientious Jew; his devotion to Christ called forth his surpassing gifts and gave his spirit wings.

We long to know something of the personal appearance and physical characteristics of this remarkable man. The traditional type of his portrait, preserved for centuries in Christian art, has unhappily no claim to be regarded as genuine. His bodily presence, he himself says, was declared by his enemies to be mean and contemptible. He calls himself rude in speech, but probably refers to the formal rules of Greek rhetoricians.[1] Beyond that his hints hardly go. A distressing bodily infirmity came to him, and persisted, a minister of Satan to buffet him, a thorn—or, rather, "sharp stake"—in the flesh, he calls it.[2] Some have thought it an infirmity of the eyes,

[1] II Cor. x. 10; xi. 5.
[2] II Cor. xii. 7.



others, with perhaps more reason, a susceptibility to epilepsy. No one really knows.

In the second century, not more than about one hundred years after Paul's death, some one wrote a description of his person—with how much to base it on we can not tell. It is found in the romantic story called the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," originally part of a larger work, the "Acts of Paul," and probably written in Asia Minor, where a recollection of Paul's appearance may well have been preserved. The tale is relating Paul's arrival at Lystra:—"And he saw Paul coming, a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well built, with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, full of grace. For sometimes he looked like a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel."



V

PAUL'S THEOLOGY

A knowledge of Paul's life and some acquaintance with the more striking traits of his mind and character is essential to an understanding of his thought. For Paul, as has been said, was no systematic theologian. Speculative thought constituted a large part of his occupation, but there is no evidence that he himself combined it into a system, or that he had the philosopher's joy in a truth for its own sake, and in constructing a rational and comprehensive explanation of the universe. Not system but vividness and vitality were the characteristics of his thought, and these great qualities sprang from the fact that his consistent and powerful intellect wrought in close intimacy with emotion, an emotion always intense, whether it were tumultuous or calm. This interpenetration of thought and feeling is made the more prominent for us because we know Paul solely through occasional writings. But the

fundamental cause lies deeper, in the nature of the man himself.

The perception of this quality must govern and guide any attempt to set forth Paul's theology, as it should govern and guide the continuous reading of his epistles. We have nowhere the cold dry light of the intellect, but everywhere the warm touch of a man. His ideas were not developed by reason of an interest in solving problems, but because these are the truths that have mastered him and by which he lives, or else such as he deems to be important for meeting the special situation of his readers. His premises, as we shall see, are not established by argument, but by experience; and the particular subjects which he chooses for his attention are mainly determined by the practical need of the moment.

Beside the fact that, even more than most men's, Paul's theological thought can only be understood through a knowledge of the man himself, and in a way complementary to that fact, stands a second important consideration. Paul's theology is, to be sure, highly individual and personal, but at the same time much of it was not at all new. Into a previously existing warp he wove a Christian woof. He was in no sense the medium of revelation of a completely new system

of doctrine. There was indeed something new, but it found in the old its chief means of expression; and throughout the whole the old constantly reappears, and forms a permanent background without which the Christianity of Paul as we know it could not have come into existence. We may turn to almost any subject of Paul's thought, whether it be the spiritual monotheism on which the whole rests, the idea of the promised Messiah, the notion of evil beings fighting against God, of Adam as the source of sin and death in the world, of the eternal judgment,—whether it be his doctrine of righteousness, of justification, of the principles of morality; we shall find ourselves wholly at a loss to understand what he means unless we recognize that in the substratum of his ideas he merely repeats what was familiar to all who knew the Old Testament and the Jewish thought of the time.

Here lies in fact a large part of the difficulty which the Church has always had in understanding Paul's meaning. Even with all modern research we know but imperfectly the background which controlled his ideas and the form of their expression. God did not see fit to reveal to Paul a complete theology for all time, which Paul might have embodied with pedagogical

purpose and skill in occasional epistles, and which we by careful and protracted study could then reconstruct in its divine originality as a standard for ourselves and our successors. The case is rather that a thoroughly trained Jew, who had at his command both the theological resources of the rabbis of the first century and also the treasures of the Old Testament, and who knew something of the Greek world whose language he spoke, was led by the Spirit of God to believe that in Jesus Christ redemption had at last been brought to the whole world, and that through faith in Jesus Christ all men's cravings could now be fully satisfied. In the light of that fundamental conviction he gained new vision on many topics, but the revelation that was made to him was rather new insight and new life than a new system. Whatever it touched it vitalized; new proportion came in, and new emphasis, big with meaning for the future, and a new element through the belief in a fulfilment already realized, but the framework of the old system chiefly remained.

But, it will be asked, if this is the natural mode of approach to Paul, how about the Gospels? Is not Paul's thought merely a part of the second chapter in the history of Christian thought? Is

it not the duty of the student of Christian history to form first a clear notion of the teaching—the theology, if you please—of Jesus Christ, and then to show how this earliest stage, through its own inherent power of growth, and under the effect of coincident external forces, led to the second great stage, the thought of Paul?

Now the relation between the theology of Paul and the teaching of Jesus presents a real problem, to which various answers have been given. By the view which attributes equal divine inspiration to all parts of the Bible it is held that the ideas of Paul, in so far as they touch the same topics as those of Jesus, are identical with them, and the two sets of ideas are used together indiscriminately as bases for a system of Biblical or of New Testament theology. On the other hand a modern view has gone to the opposite extreme. Students have been so impressed with the obvious differences in point of view, main subjects of attention, and mode of conception that they have denied that Paul's thought had anything to do with, or was at all influenced by, the thought of Jesus. Both views are wrong. The first certainly substitutes a dry framework of propositions for the living organism of individual thought and interest. The second view exaggerates the fact. It is true that

we have in Paul but little reference to the Kingdom of God, the main subjects of which he speaks are often different from those of the Gospels, there are strangely few sentences which can be pointed out as clearly showing the influence of Jesus' language. Yet, while all this is true, Paul plainly shared the deepest thought of Jesus about the nature of God, as gracious Father, about God's attitude of love to the world, about man's opportunity to enter at once into the privilege of purely spiritual religion, and man's duty to observe a vigorous morality in which the demands of Jewish law were summed up in and supplanted by the comprehensive principle of love. How is this to be explained?

The problem is one of the hardest in all the study of the New Testament. The secret would seem to lie in the remarkable fact that Paul did not come to his main ideas through hearing, receiving, and meditating upon the precepts and parables of the Gospels, but reached them by a different path. Paul's thought is not a continuous development from the thought of Jesus, but is in a measure a new start, yet so controlled by the supreme expression of Jesus' nature, not in words but in his life and death, that it is fully dependent upon Jesus and in fundamental



harmony with him. By Paul's conversion he was brought not to the Teacher of Galilee, but to Jesus Christ the crucified, now risen from the dead, and Lord in heavenly glory. This new relation led to surprising results, for to Paul's penetrating insight the relation was not one that could be merely appended to the older system of his thought; it asserted for itself dominance, and required that in its light the whole of religious thought should be reorganized. Out of it, and, as it were, independently of the tradition of Jesus' sayings, came the harmony with Jesus' thought that we have recognized. In the very name Jesus Christ, which Paul now accepted, lay a paradox, for it meant that the Messiah of God had suffered the death of a criminal; and in the solution which Paul found for this paradox was involved the great change in the deepest springs of his thought. He came by his conversion to see that the crucifixion was not, as the Jews thought, and as he had once thought, a just expression of God's wrath against an impostor, but contained God's gift of salvation to the world. From that perception he could proceed to the rest of his view of God and of God's will for men. For this reason, while knowledge and some use of the sayings of Jesus is not to be denied to him, the

great thoughts which filled his mind were not the direct reproduction and following out of the most prominent ideas of Jesus; they were rather such ideas as gratitude for redemption by his death, absorption in his spiritually present person, knowledge of God "the Father of Jesus Christ," vision of the possible relation of redemption to all men, of its significance in history and in the very framework of the universe, such a significance that the bearer of redemption was the instrument of creation and the goal of all human life. In much of this speculative thought Paul certainly goes beyond the field in which Jesus' thought moved, and we see here the great transition to Christian theology. In a word, Paul's theology was built on the fact of Christ's death and resurrection and on Christ's person, not on his teachings. That when it is tested by a comparison with Jesus' sayings, it proves to be an adequate interpretation of Jesus, may well illustrate the perfect correspondence of the life of Jesus with those sayings.

What has just been said will make clear the relation between the ideas of Paul and those of the earliest Jewish Christians, a relation both of contrast and of resemblance. As we have seen, the leading ideas of the first Christians at Jerusalem were continuous with the thought of the Gospels,

and they dwelt much on the same topics. Yet in the nature of the case the conception of Jesus as Christ and Lord in heaven, and the necessity of explaining why God permitted him to be crucified were to them, as well as to Paul, of far-reaching consequence in bringing in new modes of thought. Paul, notwithstanding his vehement disclaimers, must have been influenced by the ideas of those who were apostles before him, but the originality and freshness of his mind, and the distinctness and profoundness of his own experience gave his thought peculiar elevation and permanent fruitfulness and influence.

Having thus taken note of the fact that the key to an understanding of Paul's thought lies in the combination of his own peculiar individuality with a whole previous system of thought in which he had been trained, and having remarked that Paul's thought does not represent the direct formal development in a straight line of the ideas on which Jesus laid emphasis, but rather the approach to those ideas from a new angle, we are ready to consider the substance of Paul's theological thought. Although Paul was no systematic theologian, he yet reflected and uttered himself upon many of the topics with which systematic theologians have occupied themselves. Ac-

cordingly it would be possible to present his thought by constructing a complete scheme of such topics, and letting Paul answer formally on each one. The result, however, would bear but a distant resemblance to Paul. The only right way is to strike for the real centre and view the whole in company with Paul from that post of advantage. That centre in Paul's thought is the idea, nay not the idea but rather the fact, of Redemption.

Of how Paul reached the characteristic views which we find existing in mature form in his epistles he has left no account. This is to be regretted, for it is just here that fuller knowledge would most further our understanding of the doctrines. We are left to inference and to the nature of the case. As a Jew Paul had been zealous in all the niceties of the Pharisaic religion. His ideal had been complete devotion to the will of God in accordance with the demands of an exacting conscience, and we are not to think of him as merely cherishing a selfish wish to secure salvation by conformity to an externally imposed authority, but as having a real and enthusiastic determination within him to conquer sin and to achieve genuine righteousness of character. Then came suddenly his conversion. This had been pri-

marily the change to the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. But we have seen how in looking back on his life from a point twenty years or more afterward the emphasis had shifted, and how he saw the main significance of his conversion to lie in the deliverance then effected from the condemnation which God necessarily pronounced on his inadequate moral accomplishment;[1] in his conversion he gained not only a new view of Christ, but a new idea of God. Thus from the conviction, Jesus is the Messiah, which, we may suppose, flashed upon him in his vision before the walls of Damascus with self-evidencing certainty, Paul was enabled by his own experience to proceed, first, to the further proposition that through the death of Jesus Christ the salvation of the world is accomplished, and secondly, to the proposition that if men believe that Jesus is Christ and Lord, God forgives their sins and they are saved.

The former of these steps, from belief in the messiahship of Jesus to belief in the vicarious effect of his death had, it appears, been already taken before Paul by the original Christians. The death of this alleged Messiah was from the first a stumbling-block to the Jews which the Christians also must have felt for themselves. They over-

[1] Rom. vii. 7—viii. 4.

came it, and transformed the stumbling-block into a foundation stone, not only by declaring that Jesus' death was, through the resurrection, the portal to new and glorified life on the right hand of God, but by presenting the death itself as a direct means of accomplishing the Messiah's work of bringing salvation to God's people. In doing so they had the aid of certain sayings—impressive though few—of the Lord himself; chiefly, "The Son of Man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;" and the words of institution, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." Moreover the view of Jesus' death taught in these sayings was made easy and acceptable to these men by the fact that the higher Jewish thought had already perceived the great and true principle that suffering may be vicarious, not penal, and that it is the divinely ordained method of service in this world. In the Book of Isaiah, chapter liii, this perception had found classic expression: "He was . . . a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . . The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Here, centuries before Christ, the suffering of the Servant of the Lord, in whom the prophet saw the genius of the nation personified, is apprehended as an expiation, or means of securing forgiveness, for others' sins. In other Jewish writings the thought of vicarious expiation is found. Thus the treatise called the Fourth Book of Maccabees says of the Maccabæan martyrs, "They became as it were a vicarious expiation for the sins of the nation, and through the blood of those godly men and their atoning death divine providence saved afflicted Israel."[1] So the rabbis illustrated by the sufferings of Moses and Ezekiel the principle that the sufferings and death of the righteous make atonement. It was believed that here is a divine law of the universe, and by the application of this explanation the cross of Jesus was made not the refutation but the proof of his position as Messiah.

To one who does not make his approach from the side of Jewish ideas of expiation, a part of this step which the early Christians and Paul took is not altogether easy. The historical significance of a vicarious act, or of vicarious suffering, in that it secures results for the benefit of another, is clear enough; and the real efficacy of the death

[1] IV Maccabees xvii. 22, cf. vi. 27-29.

of Jesus in the establishment of the Christian religion, with all the spiritual and temporal blessings that have flowed to us therefrom, is easily comprehended as the supreme demonstration in history of the law of suffering and sacrifice. But Paul held that the death of Christ was efficacious not merely in that way, as an agency of redemption, but as the very prerequisite and condition of God's redemptive activity itself, and as making possible any gracious response to man's repentance; and how this can be is less easily comprehended. An explanation or justification of this connection, which he believes to exist between the death of Christ and the possibility of God's exercising his forgiving love, Paul nowhere undertakes to give. Is it fair to see here the result of the process by which through the thought of a God needing to be appeased there came into the faith of the world the conception of a God who is love, the Father whom Jesus had known? May it be, as some one has put it, that Paul had not fully thought through and clarified the fundamental idea of God at which, as a Christian, he had now arrived? Did his idea of God contain surviving elements of a lower stage of religion, which he was able to overcome only by means of conceptions that lose their validity when the pass-

ing away of that which they neutralized deprives them of their function?

Paul's theology is certainly not susceptible of rational demonstration to the modern mind. The most that reason can do with his doctrine is to show that it is not contrary to but is consonant with rational principles. But to undergo a new inner experience is the privilege of genius, or, if you prefer (since genius is but the human organ whereby divine revelation is received), it is the gift of God. The experience is real, and when it is once attained, and shown to be still not contrary to reason, we for our part can, if we will, enter into and reproduce it. It has been well observed, however, that the particular form of experience and of faith which Paul had is not for every man, not even for every Christian; and that is one lesson of the long history of the Christian religion.

That the death of Jesus Christ was not a punishment from God but was a means of securing the salvation of men, in a word was vicarious, must have been from the first an essential part of Christian apologetics and missionary preaching. As such Paul doubtless heard it; and, when he became convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, he accepted it as a part of that belief. It is not strange that this part of Christian faith gained

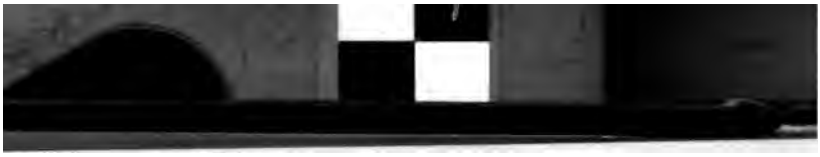
in his view of Christianity a towering and supreme importance. Paul knew Christ as the risen Lord in heaven, and the one fact of his earthly life so conspicuous as to outshadow all the rest was his death. Paul staked his whole apprehension of the meaning of Jesus Christ's person and work on the representative significance of the death on the cross as interpreted in the light of the resurrection.

By this method of approach his thought made great leaps. He was not dependent on the toilsome study of the implication of Jesus' words, such as we undertake. He was not subject to the doubtful issue of the earlier primitive Christian method, which added observance of Christ's precepts and the hope of his second coming from heaven as Messiah to the customary religion of devout Jews. Paul found in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the redemption through it which to his mind, if Jesus was Christ, could alone account for the crucifixion, the essence of his gospel. This interpretation of Jesus Christ involved—at any rate to the notions of our age, with our habit of inductive reasoning—a tremendous risk, the risk of a complete misapprehension and thus of complete failure. Paul never recognized this risk, because a doubt in the absolute truth of his gospel

never entered his mind after that gospel had once been formulated. Only by the essential truth of Paul's gospel can I explain its power; but it was not reached by proving or assuming premises and following them with an impregnable logical construction. In the hazardous venture of Paul's faith lay the possibility of securing a central and radical and therefore germinant principle. By following his independent method he was able freely to pursue wherever this principle led, and wherever men's needs called. With all his necessary subjection to ingrained Jewish habits of thinking, which could not pass away, he yet by his boldness made of the Gospel no longer the modification of an old religion, but a new creation, able to stand with its new principle and to conquer the thought of the world. Paul did not found Christianity; the possibility of the new power was given by Jesus Christ, and if Paul had not done this work another would have done it in some other way; but yet, as a fact of history, to Paul belongs the lasting credit of establishing Christianity on an independent basis. He did this by casting away everything else, and taking his stand solely on the gospel of redemption by the blood of Christ. The second step which Paul took, namely, the advance from the view that Jesus' death was

a vicarious means of salvation to the further idea that if men believe that Jesus is Christ they secure this salvation, we shall consider later on.

The chief difficulty in understanding Paul's thought is in understanding the point at which he starts. When the idea of redemption by the death of Christ is once accepted, and its central position and controlling influence recognized, the outlines of his theology become clear. His language and the form taken by his thought are everywhere influenced by his study of the Old Testament and by the theology in which he had been trained, and some knowledge of these things is requisite for understanding Paul. As we come to know more of these matters, uncertainties in our knowledge of Paul are being gradually removed. In Paul's doctrine itself it is worth while in particular to observe the inward, personal, intimate nature of his conception of salvation. No external application of welfare imposed from without, no mere participation in a new epoch of comfort and bliss, no mere membership in the body of the Messiah's people to be attained when the day of disclosures and of division shall come, would have satisfied his needs. The longing of the Psalmist, who confesses, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done that which is evil in thy sight,"



and entreats, "Cast me not away from thy presence; . . . restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," is the longing of Paul. The salvation he desires is a change in the innermost relation between himself and God. In Paul, as to some extent in the author of the nearly contemporary Second Book of Esdras, thought has risen to a plane,—of abstractness, if you will,—where spiritual processes and spiritual relations alone are important, and the concrete materialistic metaphors of popular imagery are in the main recognized as purely figurative. We cannot affirm as much for the thought of the main body of Jews or of Jewish Christians, any more than we can for the thought of vast masses of Christians throughout the ages.

Paul's distinctive ideas about man, God, and Christ appear, as has been already remarked, in connection with his utterances about redemption. He has a doctrine of man as the subject of redemption. His view of God is revealed by his thought about redemption. His conception of Christ starts from the idea of redemption. What this redemption consists in we shall presently see more clearly.

Apart from redemption man is under the power of sin, whereby even when he would do good evil

is often present with him. Not total but universal depravity is Paul's view of the present state of the human race. That view was founded on the reproaches of his own conscience; and it was confirmed by observation of the Jewish as well as the gentile world. The power of Sin over man is the natural, though not necessary, result of the constitutional weakness of human nature, and has been established by the long series of generations in which men, beginning with Adam, have sinned. But sin itself is in Paul's view the act of the individual, and the individual is responsible for it. The attitude of God toward sin is expressively, but metaphorically, described by the Old Testament term "wrath"; the punishment of sin is physical death, which involves—except redemption and resurrection prevent—eternal abode in Hades and exclusion from the light and joy of God's presence.

Into the psychology by the aid of which—with distinction of flesh and spirit—Paul expresses his view we need not here enter, important as an understanding of it is for the understanding of many passages of Paul's epistles. The relation, however, of Sin to the Law is essential for our purpose. The Jewish Law meant two burdens; it meant the burden laid on a sensitive conscience

by the requirements of morals, and it meant the burden of the required Jewish observances of washings and fastings and distinction of meats and the rest. When Paul speaks of the Law he means both these. Now the whole energy of Paul's life while a Pharisee had been thrown into the attempt faithfully to observe this Law. His fine moral sense told him that in that attempt he had failed. He came later to see that in concentrating his whole being on observing the ordinances of the Law he had missed the true service of God. Hence Sin and Law seemed to him inextricably united, and in his later discussion he declares—strange as it appears to us—that slavery to the Law is the same as slavery to Sin. The attempt perfectly to obey the Law leads only to despair.

Such, then, is the situation apart from redemption, even for the most favored man of all, the Jew. He has a Law to observe, and knows that the perfect observance of it will maintain his right relation with God intact. But he is weak and under the control of Sin, and the Law instead of bringing him to salvation, simply reveals to him by its clear light his own sinfulness, or even (for so far does Paul go) by the reaction against its requirements positively provokes him to its own

violation. Here comes in Redemption. Paul's conviction, which we have already discussed, that the death of Jesus Christ is the gift of God whereby men are saved, brought him to a new understanding of law. If salvation has thus been given by God's grace, it is evident that God does not expect men to earn it by fulfilling law. Indeed he has not given the Law with that in view, as results have shown. What God asks is only that men will believe that Jesus is the Messiah. With that belief comes a new life in the soul, which leads to complete redemption. Paul knows all this, not because he can prove it by argument, which he nowhere tries to do, but because, the faith having been revealed to him with divine accreditment, its power and results had proved themselves true in his own experience of peace. To this new life he will bring all men. The act of Faith which initiates it is within man's power.

Here we have no structure of logic, but the product of a combination of insight, inference, and experience. By trusting to the full his gospel of redemption through the death of Christ, Paul has been able to develop in detail a view of Christianity externally very different from the teaching of Jesus Christ, but in its inner essentials a faithful interpretation of his teaching and his life.



The redemption to which faith introduces man is twofold, both from the so-called wrath of God and from the power of sin which occasioned that wrath; or in other language, both from guilt and from moral degradation and corruption. The former redemption is forgiveness, the latter is renewal of the moral forces of man's nature. Both are needs of sinful man; both are included in Paul's thought. Paul's names for these two aspects of redemption are sometimes strange. Forgiveness he calls justification. It is the same thing as atonement, or reconciliation, terms in which somewhat different aspects of the same process are emphasized. In this process we become sons of God; and since God's attitude is now one not of exaction, but of favor and grace, by God's act of receiving us our responsibility to obey the Law as law is wholly done away. On this side the redemption is complete here and now. For anxiety or despair there is no longer room. The problem which tormented the writer of Second Esdras, as it had tormented Paul, is solved through God's forgiveness, freely offered to every man who will accept it.

But if we stopped here, we should merely declare that in the case of believers God disregards and forgives their sin, relieves them from the

burden of the Law, and opens to them complete freedom from all restraint. This antinomianism would in no sense satisfy the man whose severe conscience made him originally feel the need of redemption. It would be indeed a mere confession on God's part of defeat by Sin. In fact, Paul never thinks of stopping here. Parallel with these objective results of faith of which we have spoken, —justification, atonement, reconciliation, sonship, is the subjective, inner change, not merely an alteration of the soul's status and relation to God, but the transformation of the believer's moral nature. With the abolition of the Law the chains of Sin are broken. In its place stands the Spirit of God, which enters men's hearts with power to produce new fruits of righteousness. With the Spirit comes Christ, and in union with Christ the believer is transformed so that he cries, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."

The double character of redemption which we have been observing in the experiences of the believer means, of course, a double character in the work of Christ. That work both secures justification (or forgiveness) for sinners, and imparts new powers through the mystic union with the Redeemer into which the believer enters. In the former aspect it is expiatory, and this character



of the death of Christ Paul expresses (as he does the corresponding experience of the believer) in many ways and by many figures. God has set forth Christ Jesus as a propitiation;[1] Christ became a curse for us;[2] God spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all;[3] God blotted out by the death of Christ the bond written in ordinances that was against us.[4] Since Jewish sacrifices were nearly always expiatory, atoning, that is securing forgiveness, for specific transgressions (usually unwitting breaches of external ritual), it was natural for Paul also to use the figure of sacrifice to set forth the expiatory quality of the death of Christ. He does so, however, explicitly and unmistakably only twice,[5] the more notable case being a verse from Ephesians, where he says that Christ "loved you and gave himself up for you, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell." No one of these figures,—the sacrificial metaphor least of all—was fundamental. Each was a mode, useful for the moment, of making clear the meaning that through the death of Christ the possibility of redemption had come to men. A "sacrificial theology" was very far

[1] Rom. iii. 25.
[2] Gal. iii. 12.
[3] Rom. viii. 32.
[4] Col. ii. 13-14.
[5] I Cor. v. 7; Eph. v. 2.

from Paul's thought, although such a one has grown up and appeals to him for authority. A theology of vicarious expiation was what Paul held, but that can exist independently of the idea of ritual sacrifice.

To Christ's death the believer owes this objective redemption from wrath and guilt; to union with the risen Christ and to the presence of the Holy Spirit in his heart, he owes the inner renewal by which alone his redemption is complete. The distinction between the Spirit of God and the spiritual heavenly Christ is not clearly explained—nor apparently made—by Paul. We seem to have two parallel lines of thought relating to two aspects of one and the same inner change. In spiritual union with Christ the believer, so it seemed to Paul, shares in the experiences of his Lord, is crucified with him and dies to sin, is raised to new life, lives not in himself but in Christ. This mystical theology evidently played a great part in Paul's dearest thought, and it reappears over and over again in his epistles. It all relates to this moral re-creation. This phase of Paul's thought has only in part established itself in popular Christianity, and some of the language still sounds strange to most modern ears. It may have its roots in conceptions unrelated to Juda-

ism, but current in the East and in Greece, to be traced in their grosser form in various frenzied rites, in which the worshipper identifies himself with the person of the deity. Equally important in Paul's doctrine was the parallel conception of the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby, likewise, the moral renovation is effected. This idea had come by a purely Hebrew line of descent, and has proved a natural and satisfactory mode of conception to the Church in all ages,—and never more so than to-day.

It was impossible, in Paul's view, that his gospel of justification by faith should produce moral laxity. A new moral power was a part of the very process, and faith introduced as well to righteousness as to justification. The summary of the moral life was Love. The formula for the relation of the various elements is "Faith, working [*or* made effective] through love." Theoretically this would come about by the necessity of the case; in practice, effort is required to make the possibility real. Paul knew the need of motives to stir men, and used them in great variety. His greatest motive is gratitude and the response to privilege. To this he believes the moral future of mankind can be trusted.

In this double redemption through the death

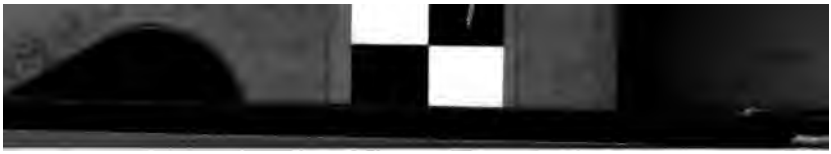
and risen life of Jesus Christ, which formed Paul's Good News, lay, he held, the solution of all problems. But it is evident that it is not primarily a philosophy, an explanation of the universe, it is primarily the recognition of the historical fact that God has now intervened in the affairs of this world. This fact attests itself by an inner experience, and from it we are able to understand God and the world. Paul's thought of God and Christ and the world is not as of an eternal, unchanging organism, whether mechanical or biological. It is rather always that of a moving panorama. He views the universe not as static but as dramatic. In history the infinite and the finite meet. This is thoroughly Jewish, and for the religious life thoroughly wholesome. Contrast it with such a conception as that sublime system in which Plato conceives of a universe of ideas mounting up to the supreme Idea, which is God. The difference is enormous, and the contrast reveals the peculiarly unhellenic character of Paul's view.

One necessary and extremely important practical result of Paul's conception of freedom from the Law was that the ceremonial part of the Jewish law was once and for all abrogated; and, obviously, under Paul's system there was no

method of restoring it, as there was of restoring the moral requirements, which were all carried over, being contained in the principle of Love. Hence the Christian religion was open to gentiles on equal terms with Jews. If faith in Christ is all that is needed, that is as easy for gentile as for Jew. "There cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman, but Christ is all, and in all." This observation, which, as we know, Paul early made and acted on, caused violent attack from the Jews. Both the Jews and the Jewish Christians, when these formed themselves into a distinct party within the Church, hated him. Their attacks on his work called out his reply in Galatians; in Romans also he shows how his mind continued to dwell on various aspects of the controversies thus occasioned. For this reason we have fuller knowledge of Paul's thought on these fundamental subjects than on some others. In Galatians he argues that the Law no longer holds in any of its parts, and that this doctrine does not in any way imply or encourage moral laxity. In Romans he expounds consecutively his doctrine of salvation, so as to show its adaptedness to human needs and to cut under Jewish attack, buttressing

it positively and negatively on various sides by analogies, demurrers, and denials.

In the earlier epistles Paul speaks of Christ mainly with reference to the work of redemption. There are certain indications of his general conception of the nature and person of Christ, but they are not full or elaborate. In later years controversy led him to develop, or at any rate more fully to set down, his views, and in Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians he has given us a tolerably complete statement. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being existent from eternity came to earth from his heavenly abode, and after the experiences of his earthly life returned to heavenly glory. He was throughout one person. He was the agent in the creation of the world as he has now become the agent in the redemption of men. He stands in the relation of reconciler and Lord to all Being. This last idea is developed in the course of thinking out Christ's contrast and superiority to all other superhuman beings (of whom Paul conceived that there were many). In setting forth this doctrine Paul shows the influence of Alexandrian modes of expression; the shadow is contrasted with the reality, the Son is called, as was the Logos, the "image" of God. But Paul nowhere dwells on these ideas. They are taken up and



used, like so many others, without forming an integral and necessary part of his system. It is probable—though the translation of the passage in question[1] is somewhat doubtful—that Paul does not use the word God to describe Jesus Christ; but if he had done so, it would cause no difficulty in the interpretation of his system. Any slightest conflict with strict monotheism is far from his thought, but Christ is a wholly superhuman being, even though he appeared on earth as a complete man. Paul's doctrine led directly to the reflection which produced the doctrine of the Trinity, although that doctrine is not, in any proper sense, itself found in Paul.

In the doctrine of Christ as thus developed we have a pictorial statement of two ideas which can be stated more abstractly: first, the idea that both creation and history find their explanation in redemption; secondly, the idea that the highest communion man can have with God is through the revelation which he has made of himself in his Son. The pictorial form is a valuable and true form; perhaps it is not a necessary form for all.

The Holy Spirit is brought by Paul into relation with both God and Christ.[2] The conception

[1] Rom. ix. 5.

[2] For instance in II Cor. xiii. 14; Eph. iv. 4-6.

of the Spirit as given to Paul by the tradition of Jewish thought was profoundly altered in his hands, and became the rational notion of a divine transforming power in the moral nature of men. Of the work of the Spirit as understood by Paul and the part which the idea played in the life of his churches we shall hear more in the next chapter.

Of the other topics of Paul's system I can speak but briefly. Of the general nature of God Paul thinks in the characteristic manner of Jewish monotheism, but with the idea of fatherhood, which was current among the Jews, interpreted in the sense of Jesus and in the light of God's provision now made for the salvation of all men. God is not only creator, king, and judge, but redeemer.

Eschatology, or an outlook to the future, is necessary to any vital religion; and the Jewish theology out of which Paul came was strongly eschatological in cast. The Messiah is an essentially eschatological figure. So Paul looked for the reappearance of Jesus Christ, and, with that event, for the general resurrection and judgment. Here, as in the doctrine of redemption, Paul thinks of God's universe not as static, but as dramatic. His positive interest in eschatology is mainly twofold: first, in the completion of redemp-

tion which the final stage of history will bring in, with the transformation of external nature, the beginning of permanent conditions, the inner moral perfecting of believers; secondly, in the sanctions of morality which the Last Judgment provides. Even believers are subject to the Judgment. Even justification by faith is not unqualified, but depends for ratification on conduct.

As a practical worker Paul had a doctrine of the Church. In the first place, the Church, which is the body of believers, is one body, and in an almost physical sense the body of Christ who is its head. Local congregations were wholly disconnected except by a common loyalty to an apostolic founder and by fellowship and friendly Christian sympathy. For gentile and Jew the relation to God is identical. But the unity is invisible. In the second place, the Church is divine. It has entered into the inheritance of the old Israel as the Congregation of God. We owe our places in it to divine ordinance, and this should stir our enthusiastic gratitude. Here come in Paul's strong expressions of foreordination, as in the first chapter of Ephesians. Paul held, as did the Pharisees before him, to the sovereignty of God in the full sense, and referred everything to it. But the emphasis in his thought is on the fact that

God has now opened wide the opportunity of salvation to others than Jews, not on the reprobation of the rest. What Paul has in mind in his statements about election, is the relation of believers to God, as seen from within. And the divine sovereignty with Paul nowhere tends to exclude man's responsibility. His explanation of the difficulty therein contained he does not give.

I have laid stress on redemption, or salvation, as the central point in Paul's theology. What, in conclusion, is in a word the New Life to which redemption leads? What does it all mean? What makes the contents of salvation? How shall we express it in plain language?

Salvation, according to Paul, is possible for man, in essence and principle, though not in complete fulfilment, here and now. It consists in two things, the assurance of forgiveness for sinners (which is a very different thing from bald justice), and the possession of new powers to choose effectually the right. Paul holds that neither of these two things can come to man so long as he thinks of God mainly as the source of moral law, which man must perfectly obey. They do however come to the man who sees Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, and so recognizes that God is the source both of law and of forgiveness.

This perception and recognition is faith. It is not merely an act of the intellect, but is at the same time a choice of the will, which puts the whole man on the side of God; and it brings in response to grateful love new and mysterious forces to occupy the believer's soul. The believer in Jesus Christ is, in Paul's view, sure that forgiveness has taken the place of wrath; that is what belief itself means, and it is confirmed by the resulting peace and joy. He is also given such inner aid that out of his faith flows love. The result is a life of freedom in faith,—freedom from bondage to a law that was never fulfilled, freedom from servitude to sin that separates from God. In place of discouragement and despair comes confidence; in place of degradation there is progress.

Paul is the apostle of freedom and optimism for all time, because, not through logical inference but by a revelation and by a fact of experience, he came to know that in the cross of Jesus Christ the gift of this salvation had been made to the world. Wherever Paul is studied or loved, we find freedom and hope, and so a power of moral enthusiasm and an incentive to theological progress.

VI

LIFE IN AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

We have already looked at the type of Christian life which formed itself and persisted for some time in Palestine, and we have seen that it did not form the basis for, nor exert a controlling influence upon, the Christian life of the Church throughout the world. The churches which controlled early Christianity were not Jerusalem, but Antioch, Asia Minor, Corinth, Rome, southern Gaul.

We have also looked at the theology of the great Apostle Paul. But his mighty genius always stood somewhat removed from the common level even of Christians who reverenced his name. He was at once too Jewish in his mode of thought and form of expression to be fully understood by plain men trained in other schools, and too daring in his flights of noble speculation to be followed by lesser spirits. The common run of gentile Christianity was not Jewish, and was only in a limited degree Pauline. In the

average Christianity, indeed, of the apostolic age we shall not look for what can properly be called a type of theology wrought out as a consistent body of doctrine. What most interests us is rather the conditions of its inner and outer life, its forms of organization and worship, its dangerous tendencies, its relation to the world outside. These aspects of early Christianity we need to understand, in order both to see the meaning of much of the New Testament and to comprehend properly the later history of the Christian Church and of Christian theology. In studying the life of the gentile churches of this period we have to look mainly at the churches founded by Paul, because our information necessarily comes mainly from his letters to such churches; we can believe, however, that these churches fairly represent those others in similar places which other apostles had founded.

It is worth while in beginning our study to observe that the possibility of forming such a picture as that at which we aim is one of the most important tests of the trustworthiness of our knowledge of the apostolic age. If we can gain from the indications of our sources an entirely clear and consistent account of the life of the period, we have in that fact one of the strongest

possible arguments against those who deny the value of our sources for the history of the period to which they purport to relate.

We may look first at the inner life of these Christian churches in the gentile world. Apart from the general influences which must at all times affect any Christian church, because they pertain to the nature of such an organization, certain special circumstances combined to give these churches a distinctive character. In the first place they formed a very small body in the midst of a large world. In the nature of the case they were separatists. That they had the merits and defects of such a group, thrown in on one another, cut off from the world, is plain from Paul's epistles and the practical directions with which they were filled. It is the life of a great family to which his instructions relate, with its charm and its dangers. This same fact explains the ideals of the Christians themselves. Not to influence the world by pervading and transforming its social order, but to form a group apart where the virtues of individuals should be cultivated in the soil of religion, and which should attract one and another from the evil world without, was the aim which they set themselves. Hence they did not, even when they were individually



fitted to do so, enter into the world of literary culture, of art, of public life. Many of these pursuits were closed to them because of their connection with heathen customs. But even had this not been the case, the early Christians would have withdrawn from them into the circle of their own life and interests. The outside world looked on the Christians as social and religious anarchists; and the judgment was not altogether unjust. The Christians had a new foundation for their life, and did not need to share in the world's society; and like other compact bodies they had never a doubt that their own cause was the cause of God and their own future secure.

A second controlling influence for their thought and life was the expectation, which was universally cherished, of a speedy end to the present order of things, to be brought about by the end of this world, the return of Jesus Christ, and the Day of Judgment. In this group of ideas the Jewish point of view which Christianity brought into the minds of men is very apparent. The Jews had conceived of all time, from the eternity of the past to the eternity of the future, as divided into two ages, "the present age" and "the coming age," separated by the Day of

Judgment and the coming of the Messiah and the other connected events belonging to the entrance upon eternal life. This conception went over into Christianity, with the difference that the Christians knew the Messiah, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and the consequent difference that his expected coming (or "parousia") was not his first coming but would be his return to consummate his work. Jesus himself had thus used the imagery of Jewish thought to set forth his expectation of the future. Under these figures he had seen the coming triumph of God's cause, the establishment of God's rule in the world, the goal of history. How far he presented to himself this future as to come about actually in the material forms of the imagery which he used; how far he consciously recognized that it was metaphor and trope we shall never know. He was in the habit of transforming the old terms and figures by his wider vision and deeper insight and by his sure emphasis on the real, the ethical, the eternal. We may well believe that here, too, that was the case. Only we must beware of stripping Jesus' thought of that which gave it its distinction, and reducing it to the empirical commonplace of our own notions.

It seems clear, moreover, that Jesus had taught not only that he should return at the end of this age, but also that the end of this age and his return would come speedily, even within the lifetime of the present generation. In this expectation the earliest Christians, strengthened by the resurrection appearances, had reorganized their life at Jerusalem; it was in this hope that Paul lived; and within the limits which it set his thought moved and the life of the gentile churches was developed. Paul himself expected to live on earth to see the end of the world, and he had to explain to the Thessalonians that not only those who should survive until that time but also those believers who might die in the interval would all share in the blessings of the great, but not at all far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves. A touching evidence of the general expectation is to be seen in the words of the unknown author of the Second Epistle of Peter, who speaks of those who say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Now it is plain that if a body of men and women live with so short a vista of the world's future before them, that fact will profoundly

affect their whole life. If the time is so short, it is not worth while to lay foundations for a distant posterity, to rear a new Christian generation that shall regenerate the world by growing up into it, to provide for education, to establish institutions, to enter into the general interests of the world's life, all which is destined speedily to pass away. Only those concerns that relate directly to the eternal life will seem real; all else will be wholly subordinate, or even seem to be a deterrent from the great interests of the soul. Under such conditions what we recognize as the healthy-minded Christian attitude toward human society, work, career, is impossible. No fundamental ascetic principle is necessary in order to explain the ascetic precepts, and the apparently ascetic omission of certain interests, which we find in Paul and in early Christian life. These things were inevitable so long as the outlook into the future remained thus contracted.

Yet it must not be said that this mistake, as we must call it, was an evil. It concentrated the minds of Christians on those things that are eternal, and must have proved a moral motive of great intensity. It gradually faded under the teaching of history, and its modern counter-

part has never controlled the thought and life of any great body of Christians, nor led many far astray.

A third inner characteristic, more important than either of the other two that I have mentioned, was what is sometimes called the "enthusiasm" of the early Christian churches. By this is meant their sense of immediate divine inspiration; and this must lead us to consider the ancient idea of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God is a Hebrew idea which had had a long history and a wide range of application. It meant "God's power and agency manifest," or "God exerting power," and the presence of the Spirit was known by the possession of power to do anything unusual, provided that power were apparently derived from God. This conception held of all sorts of unusual power. The classical instance is that of Bezalel the son of Uri, of whom the Lord said unto Moses, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, . . . to devise skillful works, to work in gold and in silver and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship."[1] The superhuman energy of Othniel, of Jephthah,

[1] Exodus xxxi. 2-5.

of Samson when he slew the lion, or the strange religious frenzy of Saul prophesying and lying naked a day and a night, are all ascribed to the working of the Spirit. In the higher thought the Spirit was active in the utterances of the prophets, in the work of the king, in the equipment of the Messiah. To these ideas the Christians fell heir. The Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, was to them the source, not indeed, so far as we know, of unusual powers of handicraft or strength,—the time for that had passed,—but of all unusual phenomena which could in any way be connected with religion. The perception of religious truth, and the power to heal the sick, exaltation of mind bursting forth into psalm or song or public address, the capacity to deal effectively with the business of the congregation, ecstatic utterance in unintelligible sounds, and prophecy and visions, all were alike believed to show the presence of God's Spirit in the Church. The Christians believed that a new outpouring of the Spirit of God characterized their common life, and they found in this baptism with the Holy Spirit a chief difference between the movement initiated by John the Baptist and Christianity. "I baptized you in water, but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

This exalting sense of the immediate inspiration of God is a fundamental trait of the life of the earliest Christians. It is referred to frequently in the epistles of Paul. It carried them on in the face of hardship and persecution, it supported their confidence in the divine origin of Christianity, to the preaching of which by them that heard God himself had borne "witness with them both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." It provided a series of new Christian authorities, the prophets who spoke and the teachers who taught in the Church. In one of the letters of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, written just after the opening of the second century, we have a concrete and vivid glimpse of the action of the Spirit at a Christian meeting. He says "The Spirit . . . searcheth out the hidden things. I cried out, when I was among you; I spake with a loud voice, with God's own voice, Give ye heed to the bishop and the presbytery and deacons. Now there were those who suspected me of saying this because I knew beforehand of the division of certain persons. But he in whom I am bound is my witness that I learned it not from flesh of man; it was the preaching of the Spirit." [1]

[1] Ign. *Phil.* vii.

All this is distinctly characteristic of the apostolic age, on the Jewish and gentile sides alike, and the end of the period is marked by a change of profound significance when books, officers, external authority, fixed forms, were substituted for the Spirit working with visible power in this material and physical sphere. Such scenes as these which Paul and Ignatius portray grew less and less frequent, as the distance from the apostolic age increased. Out in the world, feeling the necessity of firmer organization, and exposed to the influence of Greek thought, the Church had to lose its age of enthusiasm, as it hardened and matured itself for the struggle that lay before it.

Of the spiritual gifts of the apostolic church we learn chiefly through Paul, and mainly because of occasions where this enthusiastic temper revealed its shadier side. The exaltation of human faculties under religious excitement, and especially, as was here necessarily the case, of more or less abnormal faculties, was attended with disorders that required Paul's thought and careful correction. He himself valued these spiritual gifts. The ecstatic and unintelligible speech which he calls "speaking with tongues" he himself practised, and likewise prophecy and heal-

ings and the rest. He, too, believed these phenomena to be the exhibition of God's Spirit working in men. But he held the gifts to vary in worth just in proportion as they were useful to the Church; and he held another view which has gradually made its way in the control of Christian thought, and constitutes perhaps his greatest single contribution to that thought. He held, namely, that every believer without exception possesses the Spirit of God, whether that Spirit manifests itself in physical phenomena, and special powers of mind and body, or not. His corollary to these two principles was that the most significant manifestations of the Spirit are the graces of character which Christian faith is sure to engender in the Christian's soul. "The fruit of the Spirit," he says, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control."

Of the evils which had to be corrected we read in I Corinthians and I Thessalonians. Possessors of the more conspicuous spiritual gifts set themselves up arrogantly as superior to their humble brethren. The fault was all the worse because these prominent and startling gifts were apt to be the ones least valuable for the edification of the Church, however useful they might be to the

private life of the bearers of them. But not only arrogance, but also disorderliness in the meetings grew out of these things, and Paul is at pains to regulate the order of procedure, so that the impetuous speakers may be restrained from presenting their God in the aspect of a God not of peace but of confusion.

One other interesting problem was raised by the new "enthusiasm," that of the proper behavior of women. The Gospel knew neither male nor female, as it recognized neither Jew nor Greek, but only the new creature in Christ Jesus. It is evident that under this new freedom and in the excitement of religious emotion the women of the Corinthian church had thrown aside some of the customs of ordinary society, and had also put themselves forward in the meetings of the Christians. It was the immediate result of the sense that every believer possesses directly the Holy Spirit. Paul settles the question adversely to the women, and this was doubtless the wise course in the emergency, but he makes his conservative decision by the application of principles which seem to us neither self-evident nor yet drawn by necessary inference from the doctrines of Christianity. And Paul himself, although sure of his practical advice, seems not to be with-

out some scruples in insisting on the order of inferiority which he names: God, Christ, man, woman; while he closes his argument with an appeal to common custom.[1]

These three circumstances, the smallness of the churches in the midst of a great world, the expectation of a speedy end, and the enthusiastic sense of immediate and universal inspiration, had thus a profound influence on the inner life of the churches. The last of them was not without its serious dangers.

But these difficulties at which we have glanced, and which early called for Paul's attention, were not the only dangers which beset the apostolic age. The epistles of Paul are largely occupied with guarding against evil tendencies arising spontaneously from within the churches, or brought to them from without. Of moral dangers there were two, laxity and asceticism. These are two faults which might seem to exclude each other, but in practice often coexist side by side in the same persons. Of the danger of moral laxity we have appalling evidence in every one of Paul's epistles. The grossest vices of the flesh of nearly every kind were pressing temptations to Christians whom Paul was able—and no doubt

[1] I Cor. xi. 1-16.

with sincerity—to congratulate on their faith and love, their enrichment in Christ and their enlightenment. We must remember the standards of the lower classes in a Greek city in the first century, and we need not, alas, go far out of our way to find modern parallels to what was prevalent in those corrupt seats of passion and selfishness. There can be scarcely any stronger exhibition of the morally regenerating power of Christian faith than to observe how from the end of the first century of our era the moral purity not only of Christian ideals but of Christian accomplishment was a characteristic of the Christian body pointed to by the apologists, and recognized with admiration by the world and the philosophers.

The danger of asceticism is met with in various parts of the world. The Epistle to the Colossians is largely occupied with argument against a certain type of thought then current in Phrygia. It evidently included precepts about meat and drink—"Touch not, taste not, handle not"—which were abhorrent to Paul's ideas, and seemed to him to threaten a false view of the significance of spiritual religion itself; and connected with these was a basis of speculation, in his view more dangerous still, because it not only implied the



essential evil of material things, but, by introducing other angelic objects of worship, deposed Jesus Christ from his supreme position in the universe. Asceticism is always the enemy of faith in a good God who has created the world, and these ideas became one of the great dangers of Christianity in the following period. Likewise, almost at the opposite geographical extreme from Colossæ, we find Christians at Rome who, under the influence of some type of Greek ascetic thought, had taken up total-abstinence from wine and from animal food.

A different danger was that of the breaking up of the Christian Church into sects. We have seen how the danger of a schism between Jewish and gentile Christianity was averted through the breadth of view of the leading Jerusalem apostles. This was but the first of many such crises. In the plastic life of these newly-formed and hence easily-dissolved churches, where active thought led to quick movement, inner groups and sects were constantly forming. The parties at Corinth are known to us by name. The admirers of Paul, and Apollos, those who held to the great name of Peter, perhaps also those who maintained their own preëminent right to belong to Christ, were parties, the existence of which

brought danger to the peace of the church, and, worse still, as all missionary work in modern times shows, broke the solid front which Christianity, in order to conquer the world, needed to present against the hosts of the world's darkness. This motive, concern about the impediment to the progress of Christian missions that lay in partisan strife, is clearly at work in Paul's repeated injunctions and entreaties to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The tendency to sectarianism went so far that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has occasion to urge his readers not to forsake assembling together, "as the custom of some is."[1]

In the earlier period of Paul's work there was danger to the faith of his converts from Judaizers who denied the sufficiency of faith in Christ for salvation, and tried to persuade gentile Christians to add to faith the fuller security of obedience to the Jewish law. The growth of the Christian Church in numbers and independent life combined with Paul's arguments and with the gradual diminution in influence of the Jewish nation and religion to check this Judaizing propa-

[1] Heb. x. 25.



ganda; after Paul's time the danger seems to have been inconsiderable.

A more serious and growing danger was one that came with entrance into the large world. A tendency was widespread and inevitable to make a combination with many types of thought so as to produce a half-christian religion stuffed with oriental speculation and Greek ideas and having a strong dash of popular superstition. This syncretism was perhaps the greatest danger to which Christianity was exposed; the most interesting example of it in the apostolic age is the system, already mentioned, of the Colossian teachers. In the second century it manifested itself in the Gnostic schools of semichristian thought.

Of course at all times these young bodies of Christians must have had to fight against the indifference and apostasy of their own members. The Christian life was hard for men and women to whom its strict morals, though at first inspiring, involved unwonted discipline. Often uncomfortable and sometimes distressing and dangerous were the relations of a Christian with his kindred and former friends. For many the goal must have come to seem far-away and faint, the path long and the power insufficient. We see these sad stories behind the stirring passages in

which Paul appeals to his friends to quit them like men in the proud recognition of their high privilege, in that God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, and will perfect until the day of Jesus Christ the good work which he hath begun in us. And less than a generation later in the whole Epistle to the Hebrews can be read a strenuous appeal called out by the danger of relapse in some important church, not, as is often supposed, into Judaism, but away from the service of the living God altogether.

But it is time to turn from the inner characteristics and dangers of the apostolic churches to their outer form and condition. If we had been at Corinth and had visited the meeting, held to the great annoyance of the Jews in the house of Titius Justus adjoining the Jews' own synagogue, we should have found there gathered, to use Paul's words, "not many wise after the flesh, not many men of influence, not many gentlemen," but rather representatives of the dull elements of the world and the weak and base elements and the elements that are commonly despised. Small tradesmen, craftsmen, freedmen, slaves would be there, both men and women. There would be some Jews; a large proportion

would be persons who had once turned with interest to Judaism but had now found in Jesus Christ not only, as with the Jews, a pure morality and a lofty monotheism, but freedom, equality, and a new power unto salvation. Among the women it is likely that some would be present of higher wealth and social position. Such was Phœbe of Cenchreæ, near Corinth, for whom Paul writes a note of introduction,[1] and who had been a patroness of the Corinthian church. We hear, too, at Corinth, of Erastus, the treasurer of the city, and of Stephanas, who seems to have been a man of substance, as was Philemon of Colossæ; at Ephesus Paul had friends among the Asiarchs, who were men of prominence in society. In Rome there is reason to believe that before the end of the first century several persons of distinction, including a consul, T. Flavius Clemens, and his wife Domitilla, near relatives of the Emperor Domitian, became Christians. But these were isolated cases, and it remained true throughout our period and for many years thereafter that the Christian churches were composed chiefly of persons of lowly position in the community.

The original meetings of these primitive

[1] Rom. xvi. 1-2.

churches were the gatherings for instruction from the missionary apostle whose word had brought them together. For this purpose they assembled in a private house as at Corinth, or in a public lecture-room as at Ephesus—where we hear of the School (or hall) of Tyrannus. As the churches became independent, two kinds of meetings appear,—those for social worship and instruction and those for common meals. Of the meetings for worship and instruction we can gain a clear notion from I Corinthians. The Christians come together in a meeting substantially like a prayer-meeting. Those whom the Spirit moves rise from their seats and offer for the worship of God and for the edification of the brethren their prayer, their psalm, their teaching, their revelation, their tongue, their interpretation of tongues. In a well-ordered meeting those who feel the impulse to speak will restrain themselves until others have ceased. In practice, the disorderly and excited pressure to be heard brought about at times an objectionable and even irreverent confusion. Paul classifies the various contributions that are thus made to the common life. Some have the gift of teaching, and in the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom (two types between which we are unable to discriminate)

bring the truth in its various aspects to men's hearing. Others are prophets, and by revelation speak that which a direct vision of God and his truth has set in their hearts.

This prophecy must have dealt with many themes. We read of a prophet who foretold a famine and secured assistance for the stricken Christians at Jerusalem; and again of warnings to Paul in every city that bonds and imprisonment await him at Jerusalem. But we also see that the stranger who comes by chance into the meeting of Christians finds himself reproved and judged by the prophets and the secrets of his heart made manifest, so that "he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed." A whole book of early Christian prophecy has been preserved to us from the middle of the second century, the "Shepherd", written by one Hermas, a Roman Christian. We can there see how moral exhortation, allegorical pictures, apocalyptic vision and foretelling of the future are all combined in one prophet's utterances, and how the sense of immediate inspiration was united with some measure of literary art. In a very early Christian writing, the "Ascension of Isaiah," which may well have been written before the year 150, we have

a contemporary description of such a prophetic trance. "As he was speaking in the Holy Spirit in the hearing of all, he became silent and his mind was taken up from him and he saw not the men that stood before him, though his eyes indeed were open. Moreover his lips were silent and the mind in his body was taken up from him. But his breath was in him, for he was seeing a vision."[1] This doubtless corresponds to one type of Christian prophecy, but we must suppose a great variety of external forms.

The psalms and hymns of which Paul repeatedly speaks consisted doubtless both of appropriate psalms from the Old Testament, as in the Jewish synagogue, and of original compositions of Christians, some notion of which we can perhaps gain from the canticles of the early chapters of Luke or the great choruses and doxologies of the Book of Revelation. They were thought of as at once addressed to God and useful for the instruction and admonition of the brethren.

Besides the enlivenment of singing, the meetings were from time to time diversified in a less orderly manner by the strange phenomenon of the gift of tongues. The nature of this is made clear by Paul's discussion in I Corinthians. As in all

[1] *Ascension of Isaiah* vi. 10-12.

times of greatly quickened religious fervor, so in the apostolic age religious emotion found physical expression. In these churches this appeared in the utterance at the church meeting of meaningless combinations of sounds, poured forth with the warmth of praise or prayer but without any participation in the exercise by the speaker's rational consciousness. It was, as Paul says, like hearing a foreigner speak in an unknown tongue, and could be made of value only if these strange languages not of this earth were interpreted by one divinely gifted to that service. Such interpreters were sometimes, but not always, present. An occasional combination of sounds seems to have been recognized by the hearers; and it is likely that the Aramaic word *abba,* father, was sometimes caught from the lips of these speakers with tongues.[1] We hear, too, of groanings and cries. All these physical manifestations of religious excitement have had parallels in later and in modern times. Even among educated people in New England convulsions, visions, and ecstacies have not been unknown. The attitude of wise pastors towards them finds a complete prototype and analogy in the judicious directions which the Apostle Paul offers to the Corinthians.

[1] Rom. viii. 15, 26-27; Gal. iv. 6.

Of stated forms of worship at these meetings we have no knowledge. Even the use of the Lord's Prayer in worship is not attested. We do know, however, that after the Jewish fashion the congregation responded Amen to the prayer spoken by one person.

That the Old Testament Scriptures in the Greek translation were read at these services we may assume, although there is no express statement to that effect. The example of the synagogue, where reading of the scriptures formed the fundamental element of the meeting, would be likely to be continued in the Christians' meetings. This is confirmed by the familiarity with the Old Testament on the part of the whole church which Paul everywhere assumes, for such acquaintance is most likely to rest on regular public reading.

It is to be observed that these Old Testament Scriptures were from the first the divinely-inspired and authoritative Bible of the Church. The Church came into existence with a sacred book already in its hand. From the outset among both Jewish and gentile Christians it was the source not only of life and inspiration but of the knowledge of truth, and the final place of appeal in discussion. In such a situation it is evident that everything must turn on the method of in-

terpreting this Bible. And all the more because with Christianity a new mode of interpreting the Old Testament had been introduced. "Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets," says Luke of Jesus with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, "he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." This exactly describes the situation in the early Church. They were prepared to find the events of Jesus' life and the truths into which the Holy Spirit had led them shadowed forth in their Bible, and therefore they did find them there. The early Christian interpretation of the Old Testament was not by the methods of critical study. It was by all the resources of allegory and by a process of forcing into the Old Testament a meaning given by contemporary thought and in any way, even remotely, akin to the Old Testament language. Such a use will always accompany a doctrine of verbal inspiration and complete authority of the letter. At the same time it is to be remarked that this use of the Old Testament was not the only one practised. Besides finding in it the reflection of their own ideas, the early Church, like the Church in all ages, felt the direct influence of the moral zeal and spiritual elevation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul not only found in the word of

Moses about muzzling the ox a warrant for the support of the Christian missionary by those for whom he labored, he also drew from a true understanding of Isaiah and the Psalms suggestions that entered into the bone and sinew of his noblest thought.

As to Christian writings we hear that letters from honored teachers were read in the churches. To this end the epistles of Paul were most of them written. Thus he writes to the Colossians, "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." In accordance with this custom the Book of Revelation, which was probably from the first intended to be read publicly in meeting, is couched in the form of a letter, with a salutation and farewell in regular epistolary fashion. Correspondence between friendly churches also was doubtless read at the meetings.

After the composition of the Gospels these must soon have come into use for edification in the church services, but how soon we cannot tell. At first the recollections of Jesus' life were preserved orally, and seem to have been used for instruction by teachers, and perhaps committed to memory by the members of the church, but we do not gain

the impression that the public worship of the earliest Christians included anything corresponding to the later reading of the Gospels.

On what day and how often in the week these meetings were held we have but slight indications, but there is ground for thinking that from an early time in the apostolic age they were held on Sunday, as they certainly were in the period next following.

Besides the meetings which I have been describing, intended for worship and instruction, which an outsider in Corinth or Ephesus might have himself attended, such a visitor would have learned of another form of assembly, to which he probably would not have been invited. This was the common meal of the church, with which was joined the observance of the Lord's supper. As in the earliest church at Jerusalem, so in Paul's time, and in some places for generations later, these common meals, or love-feasts, were kept. They were in many ways like the common meals, whether or not connected with sacrifices, of gentile and Jewish clubs, and were an altogether natural part of the life of such a society. That a lack of good breeding and kindly spirit betrayed itself in connection with these banquets

and had to be corrected by Paul is an instructive circumstance.

But these disorderly exhibitions of selfishness were of more serious import because these common meals were not only social occasions but also included the solemn symbolic commemoration of the death of the Lord. This observance of the direction which, as Paul assures us, Jesus had given for the regular repetition of the acted parable of the Last Supper, seems to have been general throughout the Church, and Paul's language and the Gospel narratives of the institution seem to imply the use of a fixed, though simple, form of words. It served to illustrate the central significance both of Christ's death, in which the New Covenant was ratified by the shedding of his blood, and of his person, on which—in spiritual communion—all might feed. It also gave the Christian Church its own sacrificial meal, and Paul sees a real relation established between the soul and Christ, by the participation in his cup and his bread, similar to that which the prevalent heathen theory of sacrificial meals saw created between a worshipper and his divinity. Then as now the parable of the eucharist had its value in the very meagreness of the accompanying language and the almost limitless freedom of

individual interpretation, subject only to the clear reference to the central fact.

With this simple rite should be mentioned the other symbolic act by which entrance on the privileges of the Church was marked—baptism, a symbolic washing, suggested by the custom of John the Baptist, not regularly practised by Jesus in his ministry, but apparently taken up from the first in the Church. That it was ordinarily performed in the form of a complete bath is likely, but its essence, like that of the Jewish lustrations called by the same name, plainly lay in its symbolism, not in its form. It marked the Christian's separation from the world and union with Christ, whereby he was washed, and sanctified, and justified. Of the baptism of infants in the apostolic age we do not directly hear, but the question of when entrance into the Christian Church began must speedily have arisen. Ancient thought had no such notion of full independence of the individual soul that it could easily separate the status of a child from that of its parents, and the example of the Jewish custom of circumcision, to which Christian baptism was early seen to form the counterpart, cannot have been without its effect. At any rate the children of believing parents were deemed "holy."

The general control of the affairs of the church was in the hands of a committee of the older members, called presbyters, or elders. They are sometimes referred to as "leaders," or as "rulers." This arrangement was similar to that of a Jewish synagogue, and at a time when living men still remembered the apostles it was believed to have been instituted by them. That this is so there is no good reason to doubt, but even if the apostles had not effected this organization, something like it would have grown up, and in some churches very likely did grow up, of itself. The care of the services, provision of a place of meeting, arrangement of the common meals, control of the money, and attention to the business of the society, would certainly have required such a governing body of competent and trusty men. Paul refers to these persons as possessing a gift of the Spirit which fitted them for the work and was wholly analogous to the gift of prophecy or of healing; and it is likely that the influence of the first elders at Corinth and elsewhere rested on the recognized fitness of those who exercised these functions, rather than on a formal election to such an office. But a more formal organization was sure to appear before long, and in any case the line between personal influence and recog-



nized official right in a new and plastic body is hard to draw.

Another term, overseer, or bishop, was also used to describe the chief authority in the churches. Whether all the elders were also called bishops, or whether some of the elders were specially chosen to bear this title and perform special functions has been disputed. The evidence is too meagre to warrant an unqualified judgment, but seems to point to an original usage which described all the elders by the more expressive name of overseers. The single bishop ruling the church and superior to the body of presbyters does not appear until after the apostolic age.

The bishops, or elders, were at least in some cases aided in their duties by a board of ministrants, or deacons, who doubtless, as in later times, helped in the eucharistic service and attended to the care of the poor. Of deacons we hear less in the apostolic age than of elders. In one case a woman, Phœbe, is called a deaconess, but the word can refer to any kind of serviceable ministry, and we cannot be sure that an office is here meant.

In its relation to the outside world the Christian Church appears as a new religion like the mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire.

Having no sanction from the higher authorities any church was liable to be suppressed by the police under the law which made it their duty to arrest and punish sacrilegious persons, thieves, and other dangerous characters. It is possible that the churches sheltered themselves to some extent under the general sanction offered to the clubs organized for providing decent burial to their members, and in the early days described in Acts the apostles generally succeeded in proving to the satisfaction of the Roman authorities that they were not revolutionists. As time went on, however, the separation of the Christians from the usual customs of life, their refusal to share not only in the vices of their former friends, but in their worship and in every act which involved worship, brought upon the believers the common fate of all separatists, the hatred of the world. Petty social persecution led on to denunciation before the government. The refusal of the Christians to offer sacrifice to the Emperor seemed to the authorities not only *lèse-majesté* but also anarchy. At the same time the unpopularity of the Christians, with their air of superior privilege and virtue, and their exclusiveness, led to many rumors of unnatural crimes and vices.

Down to the time of the great fire in Rome in

64 A.D. we do not hear of any organized persecution. At that time, however, the public detestation of the Christians as haters of the human race made it possible to bring on them the charge of setting fire to the city. In the persecution which followed the fire "a great multitude," which must mean many hundreds, including, it is said, Peter and Paul, perished. From that time it seems to have been an established principle of Roman administration that if the police chose to act, membership in the Christian sect was in itself a capital offense, somewhat as the mere profession of anarchistic sentiments is nowadays often regarded as a crime. In practice the Christians were quiet and peaceable folk, the great aim of the police authorities was to preserve order, and only when popular passion was in some way aroused was there grave danger for the Christians. For a long period it seems to have been on the whole the policy of the magistrates to repress the outbursts of popular hatred against the Christians rather than to seek these out and punish them as criminals. In the Book of Revelation we can see the reflection of a stage in the development of events when the Church had clearly perceived that the Roman State and civilization was inherently heathen and fundamentally hostile,

but before Asia Minor at least had yet seen any considerable number of martyrdoms. Only much later, when Christianity showed itself powerful and was undermining the religious bond which was supposed to hold the Roman Empire together, did the Roman State proceed systematically against what it deemed the obstinate representatives of a miserable and dangerous superstition.

Of the moral dangers to which the Christians were exposed I have already spoken. We ought not to lose sight of the brighter side of the picture. The Christian churches were the seat of the highest moral ideal and standard the world has ever known. In them the power of God wrought with new forces and great motives to the renewal of character. In the central principle of Love morality found its inner fountain; in the face of Jesus Christ it saw its model and exemplar. If the epistles of Paul show us the moral defects of his readers, they also show their moral capacity.

One part of the brotherly duty of Christians which must have occupied a great place in their life appears less prominently in the epistles of Paul than we might expect, aid to the poor. The reason is doubtless that this was a part of Chris-

tian activity which required no regulation from the apostle. He arranged, however, a contribution for the poor fellow-christians in Palestine, and there are enough indications besides to show that the natural expression of Christian brotherhood was present in abundance. Before long the care of the poor fell to the deacons.

Before leaving the consideration of the various traits and points of view of these religious societies which became planted here and there in the world of the first century and were destined to exert so great an influence on human history, we need to ask what were the special characteristics of their inner principle of unity which gave them cohesion and ensured their permanence. We may answer, I think, that Christianity as held by the gentile churches in the apostolic age was marked by three supreme and essential attributes,—universality, adequacy, and the claim of finality.

It was universal because its fundamental doctrine, on which the whole rested, was a pure spiritual monotheism, free from all national or materialistic limitations. God was so conceived that all men could understand his nature, and that no peculiarity of race or defect of general education need exclude men from belief in him and worship of him. Fatherhood is a universally compre-

hensible idea. The Christian conception of God was as the Father of all men, whose nature men know through the revelation of his purpose and character made in his Son Jesus Christ.

Again the Christianity of these people was an adequate and satisfying religion. For it offered to every soul spiritual union with God, the forgiveness of sin, new powers of moral life. If it really could give these, no religion could do more.

Finally, and not least of all, the religion in which these churches found their needs satisfied possessed in its own claim and in their conviction the character not of being *a* religion but of being *the* religion. This claim has been from time to time expressed in many ways; for the first Christians it was expressed in the belief that Jesus was Messiah and Lord, and that he who was known to men by his first coming in humility should come again in glory to bring in the consummation and completeness of God's deliverance of men. A vague expectation that some deliverer should come would have been insufficient. The thought of Jesus as the pious and heroic teacher of Galilee whose work was ended by his death, would likewise have been powerless to conquer the world. It was the thought that this Jesus was God's vicegerent in the universe that enabled the Christians



to hold fast to the new religion as absolutely worth all that life itself could offer.

It is a measure of the power and significance of Christianity itself when we think of the impression which the outward life and ways of these unsatisfactory, crude, sinning, superstitious groups of Christians would have made on one of us, and then remember that in truth

"The hopes and fears of all the years"

hung on their persistence in faith and hope and love.

VII

THE APOSTLES AND THE GOSPELS

The Apostle Paul is the most distinct figure in our view of the apostolic age. His course of life and his thought, his relations with his converts, the characteristics of Christian life in the churches he founded, are presented to us in our sources with great vividness and with sufficient completeness. But beside Paul there were many other missionaries of whose careers we can take Paul's as representative. They, too, travelled both in the larger world of gentile life and among the Jews, preached, and established churches; and the conditions of life in their churches, the dangers and the victories, the persecutions and the ideals, were doubtless of the same general kind as those which Paul's epistles show us in Corinth, Thessalonica, or Colossæ. The glimpses which the second century furnishes of a widespread Christianity give hints of the broad basis that must have been laid in the first century by a host of apostles almost entirely unknown to us even by name. Of

some of these we hear as companions of Paul at one time or another. We know at least the names of Barnabas, John Mark, Titus, who was the trusted representative of Paul in the delicate negotiations with the Corinthians, Erastus, Andronicus and Junias, Apollos the Alexandrian, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister, Aristarchus and Jesus Justus, Silas or Silvanus, Demas, Luke the beloved physician, Philemon of Colossæ, Archippus, who was perhaps the son of Philemon and had received from the Lord a ministry, apparently at Laodicea, and, in a position above all the rest, Timothy, whom Paul had taken from his home in Asia Minor near the outset of his missionary journeying and of whom he writes at Rome near the end of his life, "I have no man like-minded; . . . as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Gospel." All these must have received some direct or indirect training from Paul, and have worked in his spirit and by his methods. But besides these and independent of Paul there must have been others. Irenæus, who came from Asia Minor and was bishop of Lyons toward the end of the second century, had knowledge of a considerable number of men whom he calls Elders, or, as we might say, Fathers of the Church,

men who lived into the second century but whose roots go back into the apostolic age. They seem to have been the old men to whom the Christians of Asia Minor in the boyhood of Irenæus reverently looked up, or at any rate looked back, and who seemed to bind them to the days of the Lord and his twelve apostles. The names of two of these, John the Presbyter and Aristion, have been preserved for us, and Irenæus is still able to quote some things—including some of much importance—which these old men had handed down.

Of the original twelve apostles we have but unsatisfactory and meagre knowledge. The later church believed that they had spent their lives in preaching Christ throughout the world and that many of them had died as martyrs. Of each one a field of activity is reported, but the traditions are late and conflicting, and it is not now possible to winnow out the grain of truth that may lurk in the heap of historically worthless chaff. Thus we hear of Philip working in Scythia to the north, Thomas in Parthia to the far east, Bartholomew in Arabia and Armenia, Matthew in Ethiopia, Simon the Zealot in Egypt, Cyrene, Libya, Mauretania and the British Isles,—but most of these stories can in no sense be accounted history. It would be natural to suppose that the Twelve worked, at



any rate at first, mainly among Jews; that we know so little of them leads to the suspicion that most of them proved not to be men of great mark or originality.

Of two of the Twelve, however, more is reported, Peter and John. With them should be included James, the Lord's brother, who remained at Jerusalem, and of whom I have already spoken in connection with the history of Jewish Christianity.

In the earliest days of the Church at Jerusalem Peter appears to have been the recognized leader. Before many years, however, he left Jerusalem, and we hear of him there but once again, on the occasion of the Conference at which Paul's gospel for the gentiles was admitted as legitimate by the pillars of the mother church. At that time Peter recognized Paul and his work as approved by God. Shortly afterward he was at Antioch with Paul, and adopted the mode of life of the Christians there, abandoning Jewish customs so far as to take part with the gentile believers in the common meals of the church. But this exhibition of generous large-heartedness was checked by pressure from Jerusalem. He with others withdrew from the common life, and in consequence received a reprimand from Paul, who

in the second chapter of Galatians has recorded the chief outlines of his indignant attack. "If thou, being a Jew," cried Paul, appearing at the meeting of these Jewish separatists,—"If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the gentiles to live as do the Jews? We, although Jews by nature, ... believed on Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law. I do not make void the grace of God; for if justification is through the Law, then Christ died for nought."

Of the immediate effect of this ringing attack we hear nothing; from the New Testament we learn only that some years later a party of Christians at Corinth attached itself to the name of Peter, and that Paul refers to him at that time as married and as travelling. Whether he had been in Corinth we cannot infer from Paul's allusions; that he was occupied with preaching the Gospel we must believe, but of where he spent these years we have no knowledge.

Every incident from Peter's life that has been preserved reveals an interesting and vigorous personality. The hearty and impulsive readiness to promise more than he could perform, and to take more steps with the radicals than

he could defend to the satisfaction of his conservative associates, are attractive traits, and although Peter seems to have had no great intellectual originality and to have left no individual and lasting mark on the thought of the Church, yet a record of his life drawn with the same insight into the deeper movements of history and the same turn for picturesque incident which in the Book of Acts illuminate for us the career of Paul, would surely have given us stirring narratives and revelations of noble Christian character. His work covered more than thirty years of mature life, and must have brought him into contact with men of very various types.

Two epistles bearing Peter's name are contained in the New Testament. Of these the second and shorter epistle is written in a wholly different style from the first, appears to be made in part by taking over the whole Epistle of Jude with but slight alterations, and for the rest is probably largely borrowed from other sources. It contains some beautiful passages, but is a late production of the second century, in which Peter is merely impersonated as the author. The recognition of this pseudonymous character is a critical conclusion now beyond reasonable question, but

the precise circumstances of origin and the date of the epistle remain obscure.

The First Epistle of Peter is a writing of wholly different nature. The acceptance of it as by the Apostle Peter, whose name is attached to it, is not free from grave difficulties, but it seems to me on the whole more likely that he wrote it. It bears all the marks of intimate relation to a real situation, and is well suited to give encouragement and counsel to the Christians of the provinces of Asia Minor to whom it is addressed. Its most noteworthy characteristics are a freshness and directness which make it attractive to read and easy to quote, combined with an extraordinary degree of dependence on the epistles of Paul, especially those to the Romans and the Ephesians. The system of thought underlying the epistle, to which it gives pithy expression in vigorous maxims, is that which Paul had wrought out in the labor of years, and the resemblances in language are no less striking. First Peter stands far closer to Paul's thought than do some of the epistles which bear Paul's own name, and if Peter wrote this letter, his attitude to Paul in the later years of his life must have been one of agreement and admiration. Yet in this epistle, which is written not to Jews but to gentile Christians living in

districts in some of which Paul himself had been the chief missionary, Paul is nowhere alluded to with a single syllable. Even if he had already died, this is hard to explain.

This epistle was written, apparently, from Rome, which the writer significantly calls Babylon. The Church tradition has made Peter bishop both of Antioch and of Rome. His greatness in the history of the whole Church comes from two causes; first, because he was the unquestioned leader among the immediate disciples of Jesus Christ in Galilee and Jerusalem, and secondly, because he became the patron saint and martyr of that powerful church which at first obtained in fact, and then came by formal constitutional claim to hold, the primacy among all its peers.

At least since the end of the fourth century it has been the common view of Catholic Christians that Peter spent twenty-five years of his life at Rome, and that he was bishop of Rome. The story of his episcopate is for two reasons not likely to be true; first, because an older tradition takes a different view and names a certain Linus as the first bishop, and secondly, because it is probable that there was at Rome at that early date no single bishop at all but a board, or committee, of bishops. The period of twenty-five years, also, is certainly

an error, doubtless due to the later ignorance of Peter's place of residence after leaving Jerusalem. When Paul wrote to the Romans about the year 60, and when he wrote from Rome to the Philippians several years later, it is plain that Peter was not yet at Rome.

The tradition, however, that Peter came to Rome, and suffered martyrdom under Nero (54-68 A. D.) either in the great persecution which followed the burning of the city or somewhat later, rests on a different and firmer basis. Many Protestant scholars have, indeed, thought otherwise. At the time of the Reformation, when criticism was systematically applied to the traditions of the Roman church and church history was rewritten from the Protestant point of view, the searching and successful criticism of the statements about Peter carried away not only the legend but also a part of the historic fact. Of later years continued re-examination of the evidence has led many, without distinction of ecclesiastical connection or doctrinal bias, to believe that Peter's death actually took place at Rome. The evidence is less full than could be wished, but is on the whole sufficient. It is unquestioned that one hundred and fifty years after Peter's death it was the common belief at Rome

that he had died there, as had Paul. The "trophies" of the two great apostles could be seen on the Vatican hill and by the Ostian Way. Whether these trophies were the scenes of death or the places of burial is immaterial; a firm local tradition of the death at Rome of both apostles is attested for a time not too far distant from the event. Earlier than this date the allusions to the place where the prince of the apostles suffered martyrdom are indeterminate, although the repeated combination of Peter and Paul in the same statements suggests that they met their death in the same city, even if not at the same time.

Against this very respectable body of evidence is to be set only the neglect of some early writers to refer, or to refer definitely enough, to the place of Peter's death, an argument from silence which in view of the character of the documents in question cannot be taken as conclusive. The connection of Peter's death with Nero's persecution would further be confirmed by the fact that the traditional place of his martyrdom and the site of St. Peter's Church is the Vatican hill, where Nero's gardens lay, and where according to Tacitus the Christians were put to death with indescribable tortures. The story that Peter was crucified with his head down—by his own re-

quest because he was unworthy to meet the same punishment as his Master—is late, but it may preserve a recollection of the unusual horrors which Nero added to increase his sport. As to the date of Peter's death, it may be added that if I Peter is genuine, Peter would seem to have survived Paul, and to have written, after the latter's death, a letter to gentile Christians in the provinces of Asia Minor.

Besides the so-called Second Epistle of Peter there grew up in the second and later centuries a considerable mass of apocryphal literature connected with Peter. A "Gospel according to Peter" was still used here and there in out-of-the-way places even in the last quarter of the second century. A portion of it has recently been found in a grave in Egypt, and we are able by our own inspection to confirm an ancient bishop's opinion that it was comparatively harmless but obviously not by Peter. Other writings of which we have more or less knowledge are the "Preaching of Peter" and various books of "Acts of Peter," in which the early Christians, both orthodox and heretical, found at once entertainment and spiritual profit. Later, in the great series of romances called the "Homilies" and "Recognitions" of Clement, Peter's travels are elabo-

rately told and his ever victorious encounters with that type of all error, Simon Magus. The lesson of this great development of apocryphal writing and legend concerning Peter seems to be that the Church, while it profoundly reverenced him as first of the apostles, yet received from him little of distinctive influence, and knew but little of his history except what Luke was able to collect at Jerusalem. This would precisely accord with what seems to be the fact, that his stay in Rome was short, but was ended by a glorious martyrdom.

It was doubtless for the reason just alluded to that the Church so greatly emphasized the relation to Peter of the Gospel of Mark. The earliest statement in regard to this relation, and a statement which is very likely trustworthy, is that of Papias, a Christian writer in Asia Minor in the first half of the second century. The great work of Papias, in which he gave interpretations of the sayings contained in the already written Gospels, has not come down to us, but a few of his remarks interested one writer or another, and have been preserved as fragments. What he said about Peter is this, "And the Elder [*i.e.* the person from whom Papias derived his information] said this also: Mark, having become the interpreter of

Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow him; but afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he had heard or to set down any false statement therein." This quaint statement, thus torn from its context, where it evidently presented a defence of the Gospel of Mark against some early objection, is the foundation, so far as external evidence is concerned, of the critical study of the Gospels, and with its statement that the great literary monument of the Apostle Peter was the Gospel of Mark, we may well turn to look at the notable branch of activity in the apostolic age from which the Gospels proceeded. We shall consider at first only the first three Gospels, sometimes called the "Synoptic" Gospels, so designated because they can be arranged in the parallel columns of a synopsis, or harmony.

Of the interest and work of the earliest Chris-

tians in collecting and committing to written form the traditions of Jesus' life and teachings we know almost nothing except what can be inferred from the Gospels themselves. Papias seems to be the only writer who concerned himself with recording such knowledge as was to be had in the period next following the apostolic age. If the whole of his book might be discovered in some monastery on a Greek island or in the sand of some Egyptian grave, it would be a priceless treasure, for it would go far toward solving many a problem of New Testament criticism.

From what has been said of the character of early Christian life and thought it will not seem strange that the first generation of Christians did not have a strong interest in the mere history of the life of Christ. Their faith was in a Lord in heaven, their hope was in his return to earth, they possessed by their union with him in the Holy Spirit present guidance and constant power of progress. Life in Christ, and faith manifested in love, not mere recollections,—the present and future, not the past,—filled their thought. The events of Jesus' life to which thought especially turned were of three kinds: those in which it was believed that his messianic dignity and power were shadowed forth (especially the miracles);

those which seemed to be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy; and the circumstances of his death, with the resurrection. In other words, it was those incidents of Jesus' life that lent themselves to apologetic use as evidence in missionary preaching, together with that one supreme event of the Cross which, remaining to the Jews a stumbling-block, forced the Christians to see interpreted in it the power of God and the wisdom of God. To these should be added those incidents which were intimately bound up with striking sayings of the Lord and necessary to the understanding of such sayings.

In the case of the sayings a wider range of interests controlled the selection, and perhaps a more systematic use of the precepts and parables may be detected. The sayings which were kept in mind were especially such as related to the problems of the early Church. These included the relation of Christianity to the Jews, the rightfulness of Christian freedom, the meaning of Jesus' death as a ransom; but on these various topics the sayings, although striking and precious, are comparatively speaking not very numerous. The two main bodies of sayings which the early Christians desired, and were able, to collect were rules of conduct and assurances as to the future



by which believers might stay and comfort their hearts. The ethical and the apocalyptic words constitute the great bulk of the sayings of our Synoptic Gospels. Under the ethical should be included all the rules of conduct, whether for personal morality, life in the church, or missionary work; the apocalyptic include the parables of the Kingdom. Here, as in the events, we must not expect to find what we need for a biography, but rather a selection of instances significant for the present thought and practice of those who gathered them. We may be thankful that the singular unity and transparent sincerity of our Lord's thought enable us to gain from even such one-sided collections of his deeds and words a true knowledge of those things which he chiefly strove to impress on men. We may be still more thankful that, as Phillips Brooks used to say, Jesus Christ was not essentially a deed-doer, nor a word-sayer, but a life-giver; and no observation could be more true than that to the fundamental attitude of Christians in the apostolic age.

We are to think of the apostolic age, then, as holding in its memory the traditions of the life of Jesus and governed in its recollection by such interests as we have described,—for the events, mainly an apologetic interest, for the sayings,



mainly a practical one. These traditions were at first cherished by the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. It would seem that while still held in Palestine they reached some degree of fixed oral or written form. From Palestine by various channels they came to the Great Church of the gentile world, which has transmitted them written to us.

Since the memories of Jesus' life and teachings were at first not written, they can hardly have formed any regular part of the weekly services for worship, as the reading of the Gospels did later. Whether the collections of sayings were systematically committed to memory in a kind of catechetical class we do not know. In the addresses and teaching both to outsiders and to believers the stories and sayings were evidently used for argument, for the enforcement of moral instruction, and for encouragement. The occasional, though sparing, use which Paul makes of Jesus' sayings, and the use in the earliest writings like the Epistle of Clement of Rome (about 95 A.D.), is of this character.

The history of these traditions in their oral stage before they were given permanent written form would be of the greatest importance for the historical criticism which seeks to see Jesus Christ

exactly as he was. Unfortunately it is possible to know but little about that period of Gospel tradition. Our first clear knowledge comes with the time when literary activity arose in the composition of written Gospels. The subject has been chiefly investigated in connection with what is called the Synoptic Problem. The first three Gospels, that is to say, are closely like each other in many respects and differ widely in many respects. Out of the vast number of incidents and sayings which might have been remembered from the years of Jesus' life and ministry, a comparatively small collection has been preserved, and two-thirds of those are found in more than one of these three short Gospels. Nearly half of the sayings are found in all three. Moreover in the method of presentation, by brief detached sections, the three Gospels agree. Again the order in which these sections follow one another is in many cases not merely the chronological order in which independent reporters would necessarily coincide, but is determined in some other way, as when a group of conflicts about Sabbath observance is found together; nevertheless the order in the three Gospels is largely the same. Finally, the details of language and expression in the sections often agree in such a way as to leave no doubt



that there is here not coincidence but real literary connection. At the same time the three Gospels are far from being identical in any of these respects. As for contents more than half of Matthew and nearly half of Luke has no parallel. It is significant that in the case of Mark, on the other hand, but a very few verses are not found repeated more or less closely in either Matthew or Luke or both. Further, the order of incidents, though often the same, yet often varies; and the details of expression exhibit conspicuous variation.

These facts constitute the problem. Many theories have been suggested in the earnest study with sound method which for now a hundred years or more has been given to the subject. Out of much confusion certain main conclusions have at last emerged which seem likely to stand. The view now commonly held is that the Gospel of Mark was written first, or at any rate has been not much modified from the Gospel which was written first. The writer must have been acquainted with the body of tradition of Jesus' sayings which the Church possessed, but his object is mainly to record events of Jesus' life, and he leaves on one side most of the sayings, or at best gives abbreviated summaries of the larger collec-



tions. Mark's Gospel is specially adapted for gentile Christians, but it was written by some one thoroughly familiar with Palestine and Jewish life. The author is at home in the geography, the social customs, the political and religious institutions of the Holy Land. And he writes, not indeed with any literary pretensions whatever, but with a freshness and picturesque vividness, and with a color and a fulness of significant and accurate detail, that show him to stand very close to some one who was an eye-witness, although he nowhere implies that he was himself present. These characteristics of the Gospel correspond well with the story of Papias that Mark's information came largely from Peter. It need not be supposed that Peter's personal recollections were Mark's only source, and in any case we seem to have in Mark not a private memoir but the record of the public tradition of the Church about the life of the Master. The material had already passed through a considerable history, including perhaps translation from Aramaic, before the final composition of our Gospel. The main literary question which is now much discussed is whether our Gospel of Mark is substantially the original writing or whether it is an enlargement by another hand of an earlier and shorter document



written by Mark. For this latter theory there is no conclusive evidence, and it is now widely held that we have in our possession substantially the book which Mark wrote. He would seem to have written it some time after the death of Peter, and perhaps at Rome. This would put the date of composition somewhere after the year 64.

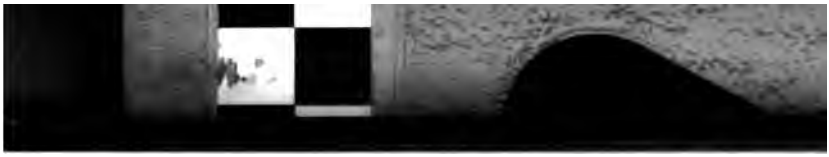
Besides the Gospel of Mark the Church had the Sayings. These, as we have seen, had been early collected in Palestine, and as we have them they plainly reflect in many interesting ways the conditions of Palestinian life at an early time. It seems likely that the Apostle Matthew, one of the Twelve, wrote down many of the sayings in the Aramaic tongue in which they were spoken. Of this document, however, we know next to nothing, for our first Gospel, which in its title has perpetuated the memory of Matthew's work, is not a direct translation of that Aramaic writing, and was surely not written by Matthew. Collections of the sayings in Greek, probably in written form, were, however, extant at an early time in the chief Greek-speaking churches, and these may well have been founded on this Aramaic work of Matthew.

We are able to detect the existence of these collections, of which no external tradition has come down to us, by observing the common character-



istics of the Gospels bearing the names Matthew and Luke. They have been constructed, as critical comparison and analysis show, by taking the Gospel of Mark as a foundation, and working into it a large body of other material, consisting mostly of sayings and parables. The method has been different in the two cases. The author, or rather editor, of the first Gospel, perhaps guided by an arrangement of the sayings which he found already made, has combined much of his new material in a series of long discourses,—the Sermon on the Mount, the mission discourse, the sayings about John the Baptist, the attack on the Pharisees, and has inserted these at appropriate places in the narrative. He has also the practice of expanding Mark's little collection of sayings and parables by the addition of other cognate matter. He has dealt with Mark's order with a good deal of freedom, though preserving much of the sequence; and he has altered the phraseology to some extent, especially in shortening the narratives of events.

Luke on the other hand has preserved Mark's order more closely. As for the sayings, he has not followed Matthew's method of massing them in long discourses, but preserves the form of distinct sections in which they had come to him.



While he follows the order of Mark more closely than does Matthew, he twice breaks it—by an insertion of over a chapter and a half (vi. 20-viii. 3) and again of over eight chapters (ix. 51-xviii. 14). Apart from the chapters describing the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus with which he prefaces Mark's narrative, the greater part of Luke's new material is contained in these two insertions.

The comparison of the additions made by Matthew and Luke to Mark's narrative show an unmistakable literary connection between the two later Gospels, which is not sufficiently accounted for by supposing that both drew on a common oral tradition. At the same time the differences in their common material are such that we must suppose the common document to have lain before them not in two copies having exactly the same form, but in two copies which had come to vary considerably. If this was the case it is possible to account pretty satisfactorily for both resemblances and differences. Some further knowledge with regard to this "second source," often called the "Logia" (a poor name which begs the question at issue) is likely to be gained by future investigation of the relation of Matthew and Luke. It ought to be possible to

determine in some degree its limits and the arrangement of its contents.

The theory of the composition of Matthew and Luke is known as the theory of Two Sources, and is now widely held to be the solution of the Synoptic Problem. It is satisfactory as far as it goes, but there is a considerable amount of matter in both Matthew and Luke which those evangelists must have obtained from other quarters than this second source. We must conceive the process of transmitting the sayings of Jesus as an extremely complicated one, with continual action and reaction of oral and written tradition. All the steps and links we shall never know.

The two Gospels of Matthew and Luke, then, as known to us, owe their origin to the desire arising at two places to combine into a single book the narratives of Mark and the traditions of Jesus' sayings. This impulse doubtless testifies to a growing historical interest. Not only were these recollections interesting because of their bearing on current apologetic discussion and for their practical use, but the facts themselves of the life of the Lord had by that time become an object of devout concern. At the same time the other interests had not disappeared, especially in Matthew. Both Matthew and Luke arose in the



gentile world, as can easily be shown by abundant evidence from general attitude and turn of phrase. That they were written at different places is shown by the fact that there are two such parallel books, and that they do not show traces of acquaintance on the part of either with the other. The differences between them are interesting.

Of Matthew's Gospel we do not know the author. All that we know is that he was not the Apostle Matthew, to whom an early tradition, for causes which can easily be understood, assigned the Gospel. The writer seems to have been a Jew, to judge by his interest in the relation of Jesus to the Jewish nation, by his large use of Jewish terms, and by his knowledge of the original text (or at any rate of the Aramaic version used in the synagogue) of the Old Testament. This circumstance is perhaps the cause of one characteristic which is of inestimable value to us, the preservation, namely, of Jesus' sayings in their original adaptation to the circumstances of Jesus' own place and time. In the sayings of Matthew we often (though not always) come far nearer to Jesus' own words than in the parallels in Luke. And, although written outside of Palestine, this Gospel seems to contemplate Jewish readers. But

yet the writer stands firmly on the ground of the Universal Church, and of Christian inclusiveness. He ends his Gospel with the great commission, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations"; he repeats with entire heartiness the anti-pharisaic saying, "To eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man"; and he represents Jesus as declaring, with unmistakable meaning, that the Lord of the Vineyard will miserably destroy the unworthy tenants, "and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons." Dawning Catholic Christianity is the environment from which the author of Matthew wrote, and because he shared in this spirit, his Gospel became the most influential of the three, and the favorite with the Church. Renan once said that the Gospel of Matthew is the most important book that ever was written.

Matthew's Gospel has a definite argumentative purpose which binds it to the early attitude toward the evangelical history. It aims to prove that Jesus fulfilled in the details of his career the prophecies of the Old Testament, and therefore is the Messiah. No Gospel gives so large a place to formal quotations of prophecy. It also aims to show—and this aim seems never lost from



view—that the Messiah's salvation was first offered to the Jews and was by them deliberately and finally rejected. This explained how the Messiah of the Jews had become the Lord of a Church in which Jews constituted so small an element.

In what part of the gentile world Matthew was written we do not know. As to its date, it was probably written after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, for that seems clearly alluded to. Most scholars think that the references of later writers and the probable use by the Gospel of John make a date not later than 100 necessary. A few hold that the years down to 130 or even 140 must be kept open. We shall be safe in assigning it to the later part of the apostolic age, between 70 and 100.

In the Gospel of Luke we see a work which shows more of the purely historical interest than the Gospel of Matthew. It is in fact the first part of a large historical undertaking, of which the second part is the Book of Acts. It may even have been the writer's intention to bring his history in a third volume down to a later date. In this Gospel is to be seen much more of literary form and care in composition than in either of the other Gospels. The author opens his

work with a dedicatory preface; he knows how to write not only the simple and solemn Biblical style which he prefers for his main narrative, but also on occasion something more resembling the periods of the Greek literature of his day. He avoids the barbarisms and solecisms which are found in Mark, and not all of which even Matthew (whose style has in general a singular evenness and smoothness) has discarded. The Gospel of Luke, unlike Matthew, is written by a gentile and with gentile Christians in view. That is clear on every page. But the author does not write from out of any Jewish-gentile controversy; his point of view is much like Matthew's. He, too, sees in Jesus the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Messiah; and he, too, holds that the great fact of Christian history has been the transfer of the centre from the Jews to the gentiles. But he is less concerned with pointing out how fully and exclusively the Gospel was originally offered to the Jews. He is more interested in showing that from the first this universal destiny was present and in calling attention to the events of the Gospel history and the sayings of the Lord in which the universality of Christianity was prefigured. His is the story of the grateful Samaritan leper, and the parable of the Good Samaritan; he reports that Jesus was



rejected at Nazareth because he called to the people's attention the generous extension of sympathy on the part of Elijah and Elisha; he continually emphasizes the devotion of Jesus to the outcast people of the Land of Israel itself. The point of view which is thus manifested in the Gospel also underlies, as we have already seen, the method of composition in the Book of Acts.

About the place of composition,—somewhere in the cosmopolitan world, where one city showed much the same traits with another,—we can make but unsatisfactory guesses. The date would seem to lie within the same period as that of Matthew, after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, and probably before the year 100, although here again some scholars would put it a little later.

The author is held by the tradition to have been "Luke the beloved physician," the companion of Paul to whom the apostle refers in Colossians. The question turns on whether the author of the Book of Acts has embodied someone else's journal in narrating the later journeys of Paul or is giving his own recollections. It is the fashion at present to think that the Book of Acts, like the Pentateuch, is made up as a composite out of earlier documents. In that case we have no knowledge of who wrote the Gospel of Luke. For myself

I must confess to being so old-fashioned as to believe that the writer of Acts was himself with Paul in his shipwreck, and that both the Gospel and the Acts are the work of a man named Luke.

In the Synoptic Gospels we thus see the traditions of the earthly life of the Lord in their passage from the original seat in Palestine to become the possession of the world. Peter and Matthew, Galilean disciples, with Mark from Jerusalem, represent the source. Luke the gentile suggests the body of persons for whose needs the evangelists had now mainly to provide. This situation has left its traces in our Gospels. They are not mere private memoirs, but public documents in which the public tradition of the Church has found its record. That is attested by the fact that almost nothing of value relating to the life and teachings of Christ has come down to us outside of these Gospels and the Gospel of John. We can see the current interests of the early Church reflected in the selection of material in these Gospels. We can also see some modification of the tradition, and in particular a certain adaptation in the form of the teaching to make it clear, or to make the underlying principle applicable in changed circumstances. This has made necessary the historical criticism of the Gospels, but upon

this engrossing subject we may not enter, farther than to say that, as we can all observe, the picture of the life and character of Jesus as given in the Synoptic Gospels shows on the whole remarkable and convincing consistency and credibility. In that picture a certain mystery is an integral and essential element, and cannot be separated out as having been added by a legendary accretion, although the determination of the exact fact with regard to the forms in which that mysteriousness of Jesus' person expressed itself is not always easy or perhaps possible.

Our task in the critical study of the Gospel tradition must be to observe what is certain, or at any rate highly probable, and to build our view on that. There is sure to be a significant and suggestive penumbra of the uncertain; and we shall have to recognize the inadequacy of every attempt to secure a historical view of the life of Christ. The notions of men will vary with their intellectual temper and with their thought of God, with their view of the world and with the degree of their satisfaction in that view. Happily the kind of life into which Jesus tried to lead men, the life of loving dependence on God conceived as Father, and of strenuous and loyal devotion to him, is clear, independently of

puzzling questions of historical criticism. If, beyond that, what seems to us certain is to others matter of doubt, we must recognize that there are many modes of approach to the Saviour of the world and to his truth, and that he did not require of men an adequate doctrine of his person (important though that has often been in contributing to obedience) but an imitation of his example. And from this, we may believe, knowledge itself shall spring.

What other attempts there were to record the traditions and bridge over the strange chasm which separated the origins of Christianity from the Great Church, we cannot fully know. Luke's preface speaks of "many" such, among which our Gospel of Mark was plainly one. Papias refers to the various translations of Matthew's writing. We have fragments of the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was used for centuries by an out-of-the-way Jewish community in Palestine. Another, the "Gospel according to the Egyptians," may be the form in which the Gospel story was first read in Egypt, and the fragments found in Egypt in 1897 and 1903 may possibly come from this Gospel. Apart from these two the gospels outside the canon are all of later origin, and are either dependent on our canonical

Gospels or else purely romantic products of pious imagination. So far as we can see, the canonical Gospels were from the time of their composition recognized as superior to all other accounts in fulness and in fidelity to the public tradition of the Church. The widely spread idea that the Church selected our Gospels on arbitrary principles or by accident out from a mass of others equally trustworthy or even better, is an idle tale.

At one great figure of the apostolic age, and at a great body of literature which stands as a third, distinct in its own character, beside the Epistles of Paul and the Synoptic Gospels, we have not yet looked. I refer of course to the Apostle John and the Gospel and three epistles which bear his name.

Over the later life of the Apostle John and over the origin of those writings zealous controversy has been rife for a century, and there still rests upon these questions a considerable degree of mystery. This is due to the lateness of the attestation of the tradition, to the surprising failure of several early writers to give any sufficient confirmation of the later tradition, and to our ignorance of the movements and issues of the years just preceding the end of the first century, a period to which the writings relate and which

need to be understood in order to the adequate interpretation of them.

The Apostle John was in Jerusalem at the time of the Conference, shortly before 50 A.D. He is said later to have gone to Ephesus, and there to have lived, the leader of that church and in particular the defender of the faith against Gnostic heretics, until after the accession of Trajan in the year 98, then to have died full of years in the love of his fellow teachers and apostles and of the whole church. At Ephesus, we are told, he wrote the Gospel and the epistles, and at Patmos, while in exile, the Revelation. This account is given by Irenæus, bishop of Lyons but native of Asia Minor, who wrote about 185 and appears to have known these facts ever since his youth. He and other writers have preserved a few incidents from John's life at Ephesus. On one occasion, as he went to bathe, he found Cerinthus (his heretical opponent) in the bath-house, and ran out without taking his bath, crying, "Let us flee, lest the bath fall because Cerinthus the enemy of truth is within." Another beautiful and touching story, too long to quote, tells how John discovered that a young man in whose welfare he had taken an interest had through bad company turned to evil ways and had taken up the life of a bandit-chief.

He sought out the robber, let himself be taken prisoner by the bandits' picket, and did not stop until by his words he had brought the rough fellow to sorrow and confession, "a great example," as the ancient writer says, "of true repentance and a great proof of regeneration, a trophy of a visible resurrection."[1] Of John's life we thus know but little. But the silence of many witnesses who must have known more than we do is not in this case sufficient ground for maintaining, as do some, that the tradition even of John's residence at Ephesus has no foundation in fact.

The problem of the authorship of the Gospel and epistles is highly complicated, and we cannot here undertake to discuss it with any fulness. It cannot be said that there is agreement, although concessions have been made on both sides. Perhaps the most gratifying circumstance in a debate which has been at times acrimonious is that the lines between the parties are not now drawn on dogmatic grounds. Thus a recent, sweeping, and, one may even say, jubilant denial of the Johannine authorship has come from an orthodox professor; while the most recent and elaborate defense is from a member of an avowedly unorthodox communion. There are four current

[1] Clem. Alex. *Quis dives*, quoted in Eus. *H. E.* III. 23.

views about the Gospel and First Epistle:—that they were written by John, the Apostle; that they were written by disciples of John and embody his teaching; that their author is wholly unknown; and that they were written by another John, the Presbyter, who may also have lived at Ephesus.

The study of the external evidence seems now to have about exhausted itself, and to have reached a relative termination with no conclusive result. To separate the literature wholly from the name of John involves so violent a rupture with an almost unbroken and very ancient tradition that many scholars feel that it would require more convincing evidence than has yet been produced. On the other hand it must be admitted that there are some obscurities in the external tradition itself, notably that caused by the fact that a small sect in the second century, nicknamed "Alogi," rejected this Gospel. The internal evidence seems on the one hand to many to point to authorship by a Palestinian Jew who commanded resources of independent traditions of the life of Jesus such as only an apostle could well have had; on the other hand the differences from what may be called the official record in the Synoptic Gospels, both as to events and sayings, seem to others hardly compatible with direct authorship by an

apostle. How far the mind of a personal follower of Jesus could have gone in the process of working over the Master's thought into an advanced, though sympathetic, form under the pressure of new problems and by aid of the light of a strange philosophy, is the question upon which most turns, and it is one upon which opinions are sure to differ. More light on the problem of the authorship of the Johannine literature is to be expected from a better understanding of the three epistles in relation to the contemporary conditions of the Church, and from fuller recognition of the immediate purpose and direct bearings of the discussions contained in the Gospel itself.

More important than the inquiry into the authorship of the Gospel, and more fruitful in result, is the investigation of the character and nature of the Gospel, and of its date.

For the date we are left in somewhat the same situation as in the case of the other Gospels. To most scholars the evidence seems to make any date later than 110 impossible, and a date some years earlier rather more likely. There remain, however, some who deny the validity of the evidence on which this judgment rests, and bring the Gospel down as late as 140. A final decision on

this matter can be reached, if ever, only by the discovery of new evidence, or by a better understanding of the general tides of thought in that period.

For the great question after all is, What is this Gospel? It is not to be classed with the Synoptic Gospels; it is no simple record of the tradition of the Church or the memory of a disciple. It is rather a work of theological reflection, which presupposes an adequate knowledge of the main facts of Jesus' life, and presents, attached to a scant framework of the course of his life, an interpretation of what he was and what he said.

It will be remembered that we said that the precise contents of the Synoptic Gospels have been largely determined by the particular interests of the church at the time when these recollections were living and abundant. The Gospel of John shows the working of this same tendency; only it has gone very much farther. The prologue with which the Gospel opens sets forth the point of view: Jesus is the Word of God and, conversely, the Word is not unknowable but has become flesh in Jesus Christ. This two-sided view, of which there will be more to say in the next chapter, is the writer's fundamental contention. What follows, especially in the discourses, is written with



constant reference to the problems and issues of the writer's own time. The grounds of the authority of the Son—what bears witness to him and how; the relation of the Son to the Father—their oneness in a unity of love; the significance of the eucharist—in reply to various objections; the meaning of his death; these and many other topics of contemporary practical interest are here discussed. The singular beauty and elusive depth of these chapters have ever been the joy and consolation of readers. It is Jesus' thought universalized and applied, its abstract truths brought to the fore; we move in a world above space and time and the human relations of this earth, of which the Synoptic Gospels are so full. As a great scholar has said, it is the sayings of Jesus "transfused into infinite renderings." But it is in the main not a record at all, but an interpretation, in which a mind of rare spiritual insight has set forth what the life and person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, meant to him. It has the quality which has been said to belong to every great portrait, that it contains something of the personality not only of the subject, but also of the painter. But in this case the painter is one whose thought and character have been formed by him whom he portrays.

How far we may rely on the Fourth Gospel for statements of historic fact is the most difficult question of all. Its chief value lies perhaps rather in the realm of truth than of fact. The impression which Jesus Christ made on the men around him is to be learned from the Synoptic Gospels. In the Fourth Gospel, whether or not it was written by John, we read the product of meditation in the light of profound spiritual experience. The problems of theology have come upon men. In John, as in the intellectually kindred Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and martyr a few years later, we have an indication of the turn men's thoughts were taking, and can see one of the bases of the Christian life and thought of the following period. Because the Gospel of John was taken into the embryo New Testament,—and, it would appear, immediately on its publication,—it has been able to exert on Christian history ever since an influence commensurate with its greatness as a product of human thought. In it we are taught to recognize in Jesus the features of the eternal Son of God; and then the problems of speculative religious thought are taken up one by one and solved in the life and the death on Calvary of the incarnate Word, who was in the beginning, and through whom in Jesus Christ came to us grace and truth.

VIII

THE PREPARATION FOR CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

We have now looked at the most characteristic aspects of Christian life and thought in the apostolic age,—at the spread of Christianity, its heroes, its churches, the beginnings of its literature. This study has brought before us the great transition from the Christianity of the first Christians at Jerusalem to the Christianity which, by the time the century ended, was planted over much of the civilized world. It is now in order to glance at the transition with which our period closes, or at any rate to see how even within the apostolic age the changes were already preparing and the tendencies showing themselves which were destined in the following century to transform primitive into Catholic Christianity. We might call it a study of the materials present in the first century out of which Catholic Christianity with its established forms of thought and modes of church life was ultimately constructed.

Between the apostolic age, with its definite character, primitive and enthusiastic, and the comparatively settled Old Catholic Church of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, lay the second century, but the second century must be regarded as the transitional stage between two strongly marked periods, itself a time of consolidation and preparation. A clear notion of the relation of primitive to Catholic Christianity is essential to an understanding of the facts and forces of the apostolic age itself.

That aspect of the transformation which has to do with the dropping away of primitive characteristics that did not last on into the Catholic period need not detain us long. Such was, for instance, the fresh enthusiasm and sense of immediate divine inspiration in which the apostolic Church lived. Certain bodies of Christians in the second century tried to preserve something of this at a time when the main Church was concerned with the building up of scriptural and official authorities; and in punishment these honest revivers of archaic conditions were called Montanists, and outlawed as heretics. Or, to take another illustration, as Christianity became naturalized in the Greek world, some of those original elements of Jewish thought which had been present from

the start grew unattractive and incomprehensible, and tended to drop from men's minds or to be greatly modified. Such were some of the materialistic and apocalyptic forms of the expectation of the future, and also the earlier confidence in the nearness of the final catastrophe. As time passes we have to look more and more to the ideas which Greek philosophy brought to Christian thinkers, and less and less to the Jewish rabbis and apocalyptists for explanation of the dark places of Christian writing. This is true, as we shall presently see, with respect not only to the positive Jewish ideas carried over into Christianity, but also to those conflicts with Jewish affirmations which had by reaction profoundly influenced the direction of Christian thought.

Of greater importance for our present purpose is the other process of change, by which elements, at first less conspicuous and by no means characteristic or dominant, but yet already present and full of germinal power, were persistently growing into readiness to become marked characteristics of the following ages. This latter change was not, any more than the former one, a mere fall in men's character and ideals from the purity of primitive Christianity. Nor was it a mere substitution of the more complete and highly organized

for the primitive and simple. It was such a growth as all human life shows, wherever life exists,—the change, accompanied by some gains and some losses, by which the various needs and impulses of the human spirit receive in successive ages their satisfaction, and which at the same time reflects the changing environment. The great and necessary tasks were accomplished, but by the two processes already mentioned,—together with others, such as the acceptance of wholly new influences from without,—the peculiar character of the apostolic age was lost and the Church acquired new distinctive traits. The changes which took place both affected thought and altered outer circumstances and arrangements.

It is in connection with this inquiry that we can best consider the several important types of thought which appear in literary form near the close of the apostolic age and in some measure supplement the thought of Paul. That these heralds of the coming time do not necessarily represent any loss in the firmness and power of men's grasp upon Christianity itself may be seen by the fact that the documents to be discussed include the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John. Whether, indeed, this latter writing is most appropriately included here is a fair ques-

tion; in reality it is so many-sided, and sums up in itself so much of the thought and experience which lay behind it, that it altogether defies classification. These later types of New Testament thought all show the influence of Paul, but represent neither direct development of his main ideas nor flat departure from them. Before proceeding to them we must first inquire as to the immediate relation of Paul himself to the period subsequent to the apostolic age.

The positive contribution of Paul to the Christianity of the following century can be clearly traced; or at any rate we can see how under his influence together with other favoring influences there was a development such as he would have rejoiced to see. Certain things for which he deliberately contended became part of the established common stock of later Christianity. Many forces and conditions doubtless co-operated, but in the form in which the results stand we appear to owe them to Paul.

In the first place his belief in the universality of Christianity became the unqualified and fundamental conviction of the whole Church. There seems to have been no time after the repulse of the Judaizers in Galatia when the danger was acute that the Christians in any large numbers

would subject themselves to the Jewish law. Every year of missionary advance made Paul's victory more secure, and, except for the sectarian separatists in Palestine, Jew and gentile alike are found standing on the great principle that the Gospel may be preached to every creature in all the nations.

Again, secondly, the conception of Jesus Christ which Paul had worked out and presented, and which he had used in the later controversies of his life, was the foundation of the view which became established in the Church. A real human being, born of a woman, born under the Law, of the seed of David according to the flesh, he was yet in undivided identity the unique Son of God, existing in the form of God, the image of the invisible God, one in whom all the fulness dwells, set apart the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness. The Church could not spare either side of this double conception, and as one side or the other was challenged, the essential elements in Paul's thought of Christ carried Christianity through more than one crisis of controversy.

A third development in the direction set by Paul was the growing consciousness of the unity of the Church. He had been at pains to secure that unity by arranging practical succor to the

poor at Jerusalem, and by urging the common relation to one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. It had lain near his heart, and had seemed to him a condition of healthy progress. In the development of the Catholic Church no tendency was stronger, until we see at last the great, though loosely knit, organism strong enough to exclude heretics from its body and to establish itself as an object of faith, an article of the Creed itself.

Fourthly, that great and most salutary advance which Paul made in the mode of conceiving the Holy Spirit became a permanent possession of the Church. He had brought this fundamental element in Jewish and Christian religious thought up from the plane of physical action where it stood in the minds of many, and transformed it into a conception of God's activity conformable in character and emphasis to the moral and spiritual thought of God to which the religion had attained. Instead of a drawback and hindrance to what we have come to call "spiritual" religion, the idea of the Holy Spirit became an elevating and ennobling force. We owe this great service to Paul. It alone would be enough to justify his claim to eminence in Christian history.

Fifthly, we can see progress following the di-

rection of Paul's own efforts in the moral gain that we find in the half-century after Paul's death. Not in vain was every one of Paul's epistles so largely occupied with moral precepts. He —and the others like him who taught the generations—succeeded in fixing in the Christian consciousness the idea that a Christian was bound by his profession to be better than other men. The result was not only a noble moral ideal but a degree of actual moral achievement to which the Christian defenders of the faith in the second century could point with well justified pride. Their claims are substantiated by the testimonies of heathen writers, so soon as these begin. From Pliny at the opening of the century on we can see that the Christian churches made upon the outside world the impression of superior virtue. The dark rumors of unnatural vices practised in secret were invariably seen by those who made investigation to be without the least shadow of foundation in fact; and we may, indeed, suspect that those slanderous tales were but the expression of the cynical judgment that somewhere in this fair-seeming Christian society there must lurk a root of peculiarly horrible secret evil. Even the hostility and contempt of Celsus, in the second half of the second century, could not deny the

earnest morality of the Christians; and the observant and wholly unpartisan physician Galen, writing at about the same time, gives striking testimony to the general high level of Christian morality, saying that some of them have advanced so far in self-control and the keen pursuit of virtue that they stand no whit behind the philosophers themselves. The patronizing tone of this remark does not detract from, but rather enhances, its value as testimony.

In these five notable respects, then, Paul's efforts were crowned with success,—in the establishment of the freedom of Christianity from the Jewish religion; in the maintenance of the essential elements of his conception of Christ; in the preservation of the unity of the Church; in the purification of the conception of the Holy Spirit; in the steady improvement of Christian morals. They cover a wide field, for they relate to the essential nature of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, to the nature of the Church, and to the practical moral welfare of its members. All these results were present in ordinary Christianity when toward the end of the second century the Church found itself well established, with Christian sacred books, distinct ritual, sacraments, creed, and episcopal organization. The contribu-

tion of Paul was not the only factor in the historical development, even in those directions which I have mentioned, and its exact weight is hard to determine, but it was certainly a factor of powerful influence.

This contribution, however, does not cover the whole, nor include some of the most distinctive parts, of Paul's thought, and it does not at all account for most of the traits which specially characterized the following period. In view of the eminence of Paul in the apostolic age and of the reverent honor which the Church paid to his name, we should have expected to find that the next ages built on him as the Latin church built on Augustine or as the German church has built on Luther, so that what separated Paul from other Christians would have appeared in the type of a Pauline Christianity. But this was not the case. The second century and the Old Catholic Church are by no means distinctively Pauline.

Thus, to take one striking instance, his doctrine of justification by faith was lost. Men did not see that it meant forgiveness in contradistinction to desert; and only about thirty years after Paul's death Clement of Rome, evidently with entire unconsciousness that he is not true to the apostle's doctrine, talks of salvation as gained

"by faith and hospitality." Again, Paul declared that the whole legal system was done away in Christ, and that we are not under any kind of law, but stand in the freedom of faith; but the Church presently transformed the Gospel itself into a New Law. Paul's high thought of the immediacy of contact with God opened to men through Christ was followed in the Church by a sacerdotal system, with priests to mediate the grace of God. And so on; it has been well said by Harnack that the Apostle Paul became to the second century "not a basis but a ferment."

This failure to preserve the distinctive Pauline doctrine came about partly because the Greek, like the modern, mind found difficulty in understanding Paul's fundamentally Jewish mode of thought and expression, partly because in solving the new problems of new circumstances men of earnest purpose but inferior devotion to a purely spiritual and ethical religion failed to apply Paul's governing principles, and substituted other guiding thoughts for Paul's. For this Paul himself is not wholly free from responsibility. His writings themselves contain what may be called Pauline germs of unpauline thought, points of contact with dangerous tendencies of the church at large, all of them, however, elements

which he himself always kept subordinate to his central thought of redemption through faith.

Such being in brief outline the relation, both positive and negative, of Paul to the thought of the succeeding age of the Church, we turn to look at the starting points in the apostolic age, both in and apart from Paul, of certain lines of progress by which grew up some of the controlling forces in the Catholic Church. In so doing we shall naturally pass over those advances which were merely the consolidation and perfection of traits already dominant, and shall try to look at those less characteristic elements of early apostolic thought and life which later became strong and prominent in Catholic Christianity. We are seeking, that is to say, for the explanation in the apostolic age of those things which differentiated the second century and the Old Catholic Church from it. These tendencies to difference had in some cases had a considerable scope before our period ended; they were partly for good and partly for evil, but the discrimination between their good and their evil has proved possible only with the aid of a long perspective. No one of the changes was due to wilfulness. They rather represent the honest efforts of devout men to understand and apply the religion in which they lived.

Perhaps the most conspicuous and important of these tendencies which, while clearly present in the apostolic age, are more characteristic of the succeeding time, is what may be called the tendency to intellectualism in Christian thought, out of which grew the dogmatic Christianity of later ages. Christianity was at first a certain kind of life, led in and ruled by a certain thought of God, namely as gracious Father. To Paul this was still the essence of Christianity, although, as we have seen, he held fast to this thought not because Jesus had said so and had illustrated the possibility of this life in his own personal character, but because this thought of God seemed to Paul the necessary inference from the death of Jesus Christ. But various forces were at work to cause men to make the Christian facts the basis of an intellectual system. Whereas Paul said "faith" and meant an act of the soul, men came soon to say "the faith" and to mean a body of doctrine. It is evident that the transmission of Christianity in missionary work required, and must ever more and more have stimulated, the formulation by believers of Christian doctrine, which could be apprehended and appropriated by new converts. Life to be conveyed requires those who would transmit it to give it form in intelligible ideas; the necessity and

the danger of this are both apparent. Again the secular education of some Christians and the inevitable and legitimate disposition of men to philosophize would in any case have sooner or later led to an increasingly intellectual apprehension of Christianity.

Now these and other causes found their special occasion in a definite intellectual problem which was present. There were in existence two modes of vital approach to Jesus Christ, the one conceiving him to be by his teaching the expounder to men of God the universal Father, the other to be in his death the conveyer to men of God's saving grace. These two tendencies, which could naïvely coëxist, and which may be conveniently, though inadequately, described as the tendencies of the Synoptic Gospels and of Paul, demanded to be brought into a stable reasoned relation to one another. Such a reasoned relation is not at all wrought out by Paul. Still less is it indicated in the Synoptic Gospels. Who was this being who combined these two aspects? How give due weight to both sides? How explain the identity of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith? By the close of the apostolic age these questions must have been pressing on many Christian thinkers.

The Gospel of John offered itself as the solution

for the problem set by these two tendencies, and the answer which it gave worked in favor of the tendency which we have called intellectualism. It is likely that the thought of John is dependent upon the ideas spread far and wide by Paul's preaching. The universalism and unity of the Church are found fully assumed and enforced in John, and so is the conception of Jesus Christ as thoroughly human and yet unique in his nature as the Son of God, as having come from an existence in the form of God and taken on himself human life and died and risen again to glorified life with God. Through faith in him, according to John, men are saved both from the guilt and from the power of sin, gaining both forgiveness and moral renewal. Many of the specific forms of Paul's thought, such as the term justification and the contrast of faith and works, John does not have, but in these cases the underlying idea is nevertheless adequately represented. On the other hand John writes with full knowledge of and plain regard for the traditions of Jesus' life current in the Church. He takes something from their supply, adds something of his own, and shows his attitude toward that mode of approach to the Saviour by throwing his whole book, which is, as we have

seen, in primary intention not so much a narrative as a theological treatise, into the form of a Gospel.

The means by which John makes this combination, and likewise the point in which he illustrates a theological advance upon Paul of enormous significance, is the introduction of the idea of Revelation as the central pivot of his thought. What redemption was in Paul's system, revelation is in John's. Not that the less prominent idea was wholly absent in the case of either, but on each side one idea is prominent and central, the other secondary. Paul knew that in Christ there came to men the revelation of eternal truth which had been hidden from the past ages, but his thought clung to the dramatic and historical, and centered about the grace of God not only made known, but made real in the cross of Calvary. So, likewise, John is not forgetful that God at a definite moment sent his Son, and that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin, but in his fundamental thought he dwells far more than does Paul on the idea of a world of spiritual things in which permanent relations eternally obtain, relations a knowledge of which has now been brought to men. His universe is less like the moving pano-

rama of history and more like an organism of mutually related elements.

This central idea of Revelation John expresses by the use of the term Logos, and thus brings Christianity into closer contact with secular thought about metaphysics and the philosophy of religion. Paul had occasionally found help in expressions drawn from the Stoic and Alexandrian philosophy, to which this idea pertained, but he had never given it the prominence that John does, nor had he found in it, and in the idea of revelation which corresponds to one side of it, the supreme explanation of the life and person of Jesus Christ. Greek philosophy had thought of God as the Absolute and Unconditioned, transcendent and remote, unapproachable in his perfect holiness. But at the same time the requirements of thought no less than those of religion demanded that God be conceived as creator and rational ground of the world, as sustaining it and active in it. To bridge over the chasm between God and the world, impassable for the mere Absolute, philosophers began to ascribe to the ideas of God creative power and a kind of substance of their own. These ideas are all summed up in the Reason of God, in which these thinkers, aided by the ambiguity of the Greek term *logos* as meaning

both reason and word, found included both the reason of God and the expression of God. Thus the thought of the abstract Absolute became supplemented in the interest of the practical needs of thought. The Logos was a conception capable of combining many apparently inconsistent aspects. It was at once God and not God. It was at once immanent in God as his reason, and flowed forth from him as his expression. It possessed a shadow of independent existence, but was capable of complete absorption in the idea of God.

The purpose of this conception is plain. It was merely a mode of so analyzing the thought of God that both sides, his high transcendence in the heavens and his immanence in the world for purposes of creation and government and religion, might have justice done them. The mode of thought known as the Logos-philosophy was widespread in various schools of Greek philosophy, and in the first century had evidently filtered down into popular speech. It had also points of contact with older Hebrew ideas which must have made it all the more welcome to a Jew, such as was beyond question the author of the Fourth Gospel. We need only to recall the first chapter of Genesis, in which, when God created the heavens and the earth, he "spake" and it was done.



Now the Gospel of John has a two-fold purpose. First, the author wishes to call attention to the human characteristics of Jesus Christ. He is loyal to the tradition of the Church and the Gospels. There have arisen teachers who deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and so confess not Jesus.[1] They were evidently incipient Gnostics. The efforts of these thinkers were directed to removing Christianity from its base and roots in the real personality of Jesus of Nazareth. They were transforming it into a speculative system like one of those in which in the second century oriental and Greek philosophy combined to enter into competition with the religion of Jesus Christ for the faith of the world. John writes his Gospel in large measure to declare unto men that which we men have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, the life which was manifested unto us.[2] And he does so by writing a Gospel in which he will not merely record the common public tradition of the Church, but will set forth the significance of the incarnation, and by constant reference to the human traits of the picture will impress on

[1] I John iv. 2 f., ii. 22.

[2] I John i. 1 f.

men that the fundamental idea of the Christian religion is not the Word of God eternally existing invisible, the object of thought and metaphysical speculation, but is Jesus Christ, known to us in his personal human character by acquaintance on this earth, an acquaintance which has been preserved in trustworthy tradition to our own time. In this fundamental insistence that not the Logos but the incarnate Logos is essential to Christianity, the Fourth Gospel has probably rendered its greatest service. For whatever may be said of idealizing tendencies and a veil of later abstract thought, yet the picture which we gain of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John is the same in its most important elements as that which we have from Matthew, Mark and Luke. The loving, sympathizing Jesus, dying to save the world, and his teaching of the Father in heaven and the duty of man, has always been recognized by the Church as the same, through whichever of the four mediums he be seen.

At the same time the other side of the author's purpose in his Gospel must not be overlooked or minimized. The writer wishes to interpret Jesus Christ and to give a philosophy of Christianity. Only so can he fully confute the opposing thinkers of whom I have spoken, and otherwise he need



hardly have added another to the already existing Gospels. Jesus Christ, the mysterious but real human person, whom men have known in the flesh, is, he says, the eternal Word of God, the Logos whose existence philosophy has already by its own methods come to postulate. In Jesus Christ the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The divine agent in creation was at the same time the divine medium of revelation. The consummation of all his revelation of God was reached when he himself appeared in human form. He was the Light of the World, and in him as Light the Truth is brought to men.

We see here a long step taken toward the intellectual apprehension of Christianity as new knowledge. The tendency is in itself good, for only in intelligible form can religion live in a world of educated life or be transmitted from one generation to another. And the Gospel of John does not limit its view to this conception. The incarnate Word has brought not only light but life. "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Christ Jesus." Life comes from light; for it rests on the knowledge of God. Both grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John does not by any means transform Chris-

tianity into a mere system of knowledge. He is as well aware as Paul that salvation primarily consists in forgiveness and moral renewal. His knowledge itself is not mere knowledge of facts, but is a noble personal acquaintance with the character of God; but for that very reason he gives to the term knowledge a place in his thought which it did not hold with Paul. And thus he joined in the inevitable progress toward a stage where acceptance of or submission to a body of doctrine, and not merely personal faith in Christ and loving devotion to him, was to be demanded of everyone who would gain entrance to the Christian Church.

Paul pursued theology and used philosophical terms in order to deal with practical problems in his own life and that of those who were spiritually dependent on him. John seems to enter on philosophical inquiries not only for practical reasons, but also that he may gain a clear intellectual view of the meaning of Christianity and its place in the divine universe and in history. In consequence, while Paul touches the depths of the sinner's soul, and kindles the moral sentiments, and makes the heart beat quicker with the inspiring rush of his Christian enthusiasm, John has

been on the whole more permanently satisfying to the philosophical theologian.

Somewhat earlier than the Gospel of John was probably written the Epistle to the Hebrews. It, too, uses the conception of the Logos, and it, too, marks a step toward intellectualism and dogmatic Christianity. Much more clearly than John, has the author of Hebrews been influenced by Paul. So much is this the case that it was for long believed that Paul was the author of the anonymous epistle, and that is still the authoritative judgment of the Roman Catholic church. Who actually wrote it is no matter. As Origen, in the third century, said, after discussing the question at length, it is something which God alone knows. It was probably written after the year 90, not to Hebrews but to gentile Christians, perhaps in Italy.

The author's purpose of writing is purely practical, and the plan and method of the whole can only be understood when that is recognized. It is a tract, designed to confirm and revive the enthusiasm for the Christian religion of persons who, partly under the stress of persecution, partly through general lack of zeal, are in danger of lapsing into religious indifference and worldly life. This is a practical purpose, but the writer

betrays throughout not merely a practical but an intellectual, philosophizing, interest in his religion. He is a man (very probably a Jew) who has had good literary training in the Alexandrian philosophy, with which he shows himself well acquainted. That he writes as a literary man is one of the reasons why his epistle is far less interesting than those of the less trained and more human Paul. He must have worked out his views of theology with much the same interest in understanding his own life and the world in which he found himself that a modern student of the philosophy of Christianity would show. He has the idea of revelation, just as John has, and he begins with it,—"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." He has also the clear notion of redemption as the cleansing of the conscience from guilt and as the bringing to naught of the power of sin. His great contribution consists in his presentation of Christianity as the final and absolute religion, the sphere both of revelation and of redemption. This is implicit in Paul and in John; the author of Hebrews has made it explicitly the key to the whole problem. All that went before was the shadow and

type; Christianity is the reality, the heavenly "idea" of religion, in which all phenomena of true religion have imperfectly shared, and which has now been revealed to men in its completeness by the Son of God. The writer works out this conception with a marvelous affluence of illustration, and unless the central thought be firmly held in mind, the reader is in danger of finding himself overwhelmed by the variety of ways in which this Alexandrian form of Plato's doctrine of ideas is applied to the various aspects of the Redeemer and his work. Underlying it all is the determination that the loyalty and enthusiasm of the readers shall be stirred by the sense of privilege and responsibility which the situation imposes. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard; . . . for how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

The Epistle to the Hebrews, then, signifies the formal entrance of the Greek spirit and method into Christianity. Something of academic finish is here seen, and some loss of the earlier suggestiveness and eager outreach beyond the power of expression. The idea of faith has become more abstract and intellectual. "Faith is assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not

seen." The very existence here of a grave definition of faith stands in a certain contrast to the personal, emotional, naïve faith of Paul. In general we find ourselves in an intellectual and almost dogmatic atmosphere. The thought of the work and sacrifice of Christ is developed in that same spirit, and in consequence Hebrews has in some respects influenced the form of Christian theology more than Paul has done. We can see this in the Church doctrines of the person of Christ and the sacrifice of Christ, which are full of the language and thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In this epistle we can trace the tendency which came to its completion in Thomas Aquinas; the author of Hebrews is the schoolman of the New Testament.

A third example of this same tendency, besides the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews, brings us still nearer to Paul. The three so-called Pastoral Epistles, bearing Paul's name and addressed to Timothy and to Titus, may have been written shortly after the year 100, but they are naturally included within the apostolic age because they present themselves in the name of an apostle, and seem in spirit to belong rather to the end of the earlier than to the beginning of the new period. The characteristic representatives of



the new period wrote in their own names. Such were Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, Justin; in the Pastorals we have at least the name of Paul.

Out of the turn toward intellectualism has come in the Pastoral Epistles something not unlike the later conception of authoritative dogma. We do not find here, indeed, the lofty intellectual apprehension of Christianity which John or Hebrews offers us, but the same tendency is seen in the reliance which is put upon transmitted and traditional doctrine as a safeguard against error. "The sound doctrine" is a phrase unknown to Paul but here often repeated. It is the body of Christian teaching which the elders have received and must transmit unchanged, the deposit of the faith. In that very term "the faith" we see the changed point of view. The Christian "holds the mystery of the faith,"[1] the apostate rejects "the faith." We note that it is not Paul's "faith," an act, the most intimate and personal, of the soul, but the Faith as an object of intellectual belief. To see the whole contrast one has but to think of Paul's deep-rooted sense of the immediate spiritual control under which he himself and all the members of his churches stood. They all speak not by book nor by tradition but by original

[1] I Tim. iii. 9.

knowledge and vision. The Epistle to the Colossians furnishes a good means of comparing Paul's method with that of the Pastoral Epistles. At Colossæ he was giving warnings against dangerous teachers who, like those later ones against whom the Pastorals direct their polemics, combined practical asceticism with dangerous speculation. But in Colossians the appeal is nowhere to any authority excepting the authority of Christ and of a divine truth to be directly apprehended by the original powers of every man. It is through preserving the union of every member with Christ the head, that there will come sound life and the establishment in faith, "even as they had been taught." Paul appeals not to "the form of sound words" but to the fundamental principles of the Gospel.

The Christian religion never can be and never has been without a basis of intelligible ideas; but periods of Christian history differ in the varying degree to which a body of ideas, or religious emotion, or conduct, or the fundamental attitude and choice of the will, is made prominent in Christian life and aspiration. It was necessary and fortunate that Christianity early gained a form which made it possible for it to be intellectually grasped. It could not otherwise have taken

its place in the life of a world of active thought, and we ought not unduly to disparage the service of dogmatic Christianity. The harm was done only when those dogmas were erected into a means for the exclusion of true believers from the Church of Christ, or when the other elements of Christianity were crowded into the background. The intellectual tendency has always to be jealously watched, lest it come to supplant the true religion which it ought by rights to serve.

A second tendency of which we see the germs already in the apostolic age, and which became later a controlling characteristic of Christian life and thought is the tendency to sacramentarianism. More and more in the early centuries rites and external acts, baptism, the Lord's supper, the laying on of hands, anointing, and the rest, together with the elements used in these sacred rites, the bread and wine, the water, the oil, the salt, and even objects in Christian history, like the name of Jesus or the cross, gained a sacramental character. They became esteemed not merely as symbols of an inner grace but as effective mediums whereby, apart from rational mental action whether of knowledge or of faith, *ipso facto,* by the very operation of the sacred act

itself, spiritual results are brought about. This tendency corresponded to the demand of that age for mysteries, and doubtless if the Christian Church had been unable to satisfy this universal desire for physical processes which are believed in full realism to carry spiritual powers, Christianity would have been limited in its field and its accomplishment. That the interest in mysteries and real sacraments lies deep in human nature and in the power of the human imagination we can see in modern as well as ancient times. In its worst form it leads to magic, in its higher forms it has entered into the living interest of some of the most spiritually-minded of intelligent Christians.

Now in the apostolic age we see the preparation for this development. Paul sees in the eucharistic cup not only a symbol but the real communion of the blood of Christ, and in the bread a real and not merely figurative participation in the body of Christ. And Paul seems to find likewise in the sacrifices of Jews and heathen a real communion with the altar, whether it be God's or demons'. "Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they that eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God: and

I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons."[1] This passage does not stand alone. Others breathe the same kind of thought, as when Paul attributes sickness in the church at Corinth to irreverence at the Lord's supper,[2] and in the mysterious reference to those "that are baptized for the dead."[3] Also the mystical efficacy ascribed to baptism as a burial with Christ into his death, while it does not go beyond the idea of a symbol, yet leans in the direction of a physical mystery.

So we find in the Gospel and epistles of John references to the water of baptism and to the flesh and blood of the Son of Man which, to say the least, were easily capable of lending themselves to sacramentarian use. In the New Testament, however, all this is kept wholly subordinate to pure and free religion, is held with thoroughly ethical and spiritual understanding. Our access to the grace wherein we stand is by faith and faith alone, not by any required physical processes or by the application of material elements. Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he

[1] I Cor. x. 18 ff.
[2] I Cor. xi. 30.
[3] I Cor. xv. 29.

hath sent. This proportion was later lost; the spirit of the age took these tendencies and used them to make unethical and unspiritual substitutes for pure religion.

A third pregnant idea which was present in Paul and the apostolic age, but which gained in later Christianity a larger influence, was the conception of the exclusive Church, and of divine election to membership in it. With Paul the Church is the body of Christ, bound to him by faith, which has found expression in a common religious life. It is pervaded by spiritual enthusiasm and is a light in the darkness of a lost world because it comprises those who have received new life in Christ. Paul assumes that those who have this new life of faith will have as one element in it courage to unite with their brethren and stand forth publicly as Christ's followers. When they do that they become members of the Church. Paul insists that everyone who can say Jesus is Lord is thereby shown to be in possession of the Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of God's acceptance.[1] In the primitive conditions of Paul's time inward attitude and outward connection could be assumed to be always present together, could be practically treated as merely

[1] I Cor. xii. 3.

two phases of one state. Through faith and therefore through the Church came salvation.

Now with the stiffening and hardening necessarily attendant upon life and struggle in the world and upon the development of intellectualism or dogma came controversies over the doctrines of the faith. Under the stress of controversy grew up, as is always the case in such circumstances, tests for excluding and including. The notion came in that salvation is actually mediated not only by faith and the Spirit, but also by outward connection with the Church, which thus became not only a means of edification and a duty owed to the whole Christian community, but itself a kind of sacrament. The change is wholly parallel to that which gave spiritual efficacy to physical processes. "No salvation outside the Church" became a maxim. We can see the germ of this in Paul or in John, but how different in its real meaning and tendency was their doctrine!

So also with the counterpart to the doctrine of the Church, the doctrine of election. To Paul the thought that God before the foundation of the world chose us in Christ to be his sons by his grace through faith, was the warrant of Christian hope and enthusiasm. Election was not a theory about God's relation to the world, but a

fact of experience. This loyal cry of the grateful soul, when taken as the basis of a theology, its logical consequences regardlessly drawn out, and the whole hardened into a system, produced ultimately Calvinism with the complete theology of election and reprobation. Calvinism was an empirical theology. It accounted admirably for the actual facts of the observed world by attributing the source of them all to God; but it neglected the fundamental truth, which Paul did not forget, that the Gospel is offered to a whole world of sin.

A fourth illustration has already been touched upon in a previous chapter. Asceticism finds in Paul's writings and practice many supports. But this tendency, which the later church so strongly emphasized, is with Paul only an exaggeration of self-control, stimulated by the fore-shortened outlook into the future of this world; it is never found as a thorough-going theory, nor is it based on a philosophy of the evil of this world or of matter. Asceticism in any proper sense of the word is wholly foreign to the teaching of Jesus, and came into Christianity not from Paul but from the Greek world into which Christianity was thrown. Nothing could be more contrary to the facts than to represent the Jewish element in Christianity as the source of Catholic asceticism.

These four illustrations are drawn from various departments of Christian thought, and may serve to make clear the way in which many of the distinctive characteristics of the period succeeding the apostolic age arose. The influences which produced such vast results as we later see were not generally foreign to primitive Christianity any more than they were characteristic of it. They were present in it because the primitive Christians were men, and men of their own time. The possibility of a religious system full of dogma, of sacraments, of ecclesiasticism or exclusivism, of asceticism, was all present, and needed only favoring circumstances to become complete reality. These circumstances, however, did not always present themselves. Other opposing forces sometimes appeared, and dangers which seemed grave were averted.

It would be instructive, but would lead us too far from our present purpose, to examine how some tendencies which were not adopted by the Catholic Church were present and might have lent themselves to a wholly parallel development. Especially by the case of Marcion, the second century theologian who isolated and exaggerated Paul's idea of the opposition of Jewish Law and Christian Gospel and who, if he had had his way,

would have deprived the Church of its Old Testament, is valuable light thrown on the forces at work and the inevitable changes which they wrought.

For it must not be supposed that the changes of which we have been speaking, and the outcome of which from the point of view of the religion of the Spirit we must in many ways regret, were due to the arbitrary interference of misguided men, or could have been avoided. A religion makes men over, and in turn is made over in the hands of its adherents. The Christianity of the year 200 was such as those generations with their special demands and limitations were able to use. It had taken on a body, as it must in any case have done; and it had built up within itself into strength those previously subordinate elements which corresponded to the special needs of men trained by centuries of paganism and philosophy. Many of these needs were permanent human needs,—of the intellect, the imagination, the discipline of character,—and something corresponding to them will always find its place in the full development of any religion that long ministers to great masses of men. But the power and divineness of Christianity is to be seen in the fact that in spite of these changes the forces of pure morality and

spiritual religion have continued in it. Noble character, trust in God as loving Father, grateful devotion to Jesus Christ, the fruits of the Spirit, the joy of salvation, have shone forth in every age. And the inherent power of spiritual religion to assert itself and to conquer ecclesiasticism and religious materialism, to triumph over asceticism and dogmatism, has been shown over and over again in Christian history. This is the value, the priceless value and inspiration to us of the apostolic age, that we find there Christianity, not indeed in formless essence, but at a stage when spiritual religion, as the personal inner relation of the human soul to God, had not yet found it necessary to harden itself into a system, and when its dominance had not yet had time to be overshadowed by subsidiary things.

We have considered thus far the preparation for Catholic Christianity on the side of thought. To a contemporary observer perhaps the more evident marks of the progress of events toward the close of the apostolic period would have been certain changes in the outer conditions and relations of the Church which must already have begun to show themselves.

Of the progress in organization which must have been made before the close of the first century we

know but little, as in general we know but little of the outer conditions of Christianity in those years. The Pastoral Epistles, though impossible to date exactly, at any rate show that considerable progress toward ecclesiastical order was early made. In Paul's day, as we have seen, spiritually endowed functionaries were the leaders of the churches. These were already transformed into regular officers before the time of the Pastorals, and we find there directions for the personal character and for the duties of persons who should be admitted to the office of presbyter or deacon. The term bishop, or overseer, appears there to be used as an appellation descriptive of the functions of those who were presbyters by office. Of the rise of the single bishop, presiding over a body of presbyters, and distinctly belonging to a third order of the ministry, we have no special warning before Ignatius.

At the same time with these changes the travelling preachers—apostles and evangelists without settled homes—were having to yield their irresponsible dignity before the growing authority of the local officials. It is not improbable that the Third Epistle of John, which clearly sprang, whoever may have written it, from some real, concrete situation, reflects the condi-

tions at a time when a travelling apostle is in danger of meeting but a cold reception from a local official "who loveth to have the preëminence." This state of things can be seen still more clearly in the later "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" where directions about the proper reception to be accorded to apostles and prophets and teachers, and the proper tests to be applied, are followed by the significant remark that bishops and deacons "also perform the service of the prophets and teachers." Through these changes the profession of the ministry as we know it, of which we do not learn from Paul, came into being. In general, the development of organization, which took place with varying rapidity in different places at and just after the close of the apostolic age was the substitution of a settled state of life for the condition of a group of camps installed for a short campaign in the enemy's country. The Christian religious community had the name of parish (*parochia*), or "group of sojourners," but it was compelled to take on the character of a permanent institution in the world.

Another kind of change was that in the relation of Christians to the outside world, and in the growth of hostility and persecution, of which I have already spoken in an earlier chapter.

In concluding our study, let us try in a few words to review this period. The immediate goal, or manifest destiny, of the Christian Church, was to spread through the civilized world, permeate all classes of society, and establish that great and powerful brotherhood, which, having made its way against the will of the Roman state, finally proved to be the one unifying force capable of holding the Roman Empire together. Only so could the realities of Christianity be preserved, for in the Great World only the Great Church could permanently survive. The apostolic age had had its own type, primitive, enthusiastic, unformed and free. This character Christianity gradually lost and never can regain; for us it can be recovered only as a refreshing and inspiring picture from the past. But in this period a certain work was done, a certain part of the Church's task accomplished, something added to what had before existed. In answering the question what this contribution was which the apostolic age made to its successor we need to remember that it handed on to the following period not what it had itself been, but what it had gained and what it was becoming.

Of the achievements of the apostolic age two were recognized at the time to be of fundamental

importance, as the Book of Acts testifies, namely the successful advance into the gentile world and the liberty with respect to the Jewish law which made this advance fruitful. Besides these two the lapse of time since that age enables us to see others. Let us briefly recount them, beginning with the most external. The churches had already begun to have regular and permanent local organization. Some of the lasting forms of common life and worship were firmly established. The meetings, the rites, the charitable aid to poorer members were in practice, and we live to-day under a system which in many respects goes back to that far-off time. A standard of Christian morals had been formulated and accepted. A classical Christian literature had been created and to some extent recognized for its true value. The unity of the Church, which includes the churches, had become a conviction, and one fraught with momentous consequences. And, finally, the main lines had been laid down which later theology was to pursue. The Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed are often contrasted in modern discussions. As between the two there are many respects in which the teaching of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews and John must be held to belong with the creed. At the end of the apos-

tolic age the Church possessed what it had received from Jewish Christianity, what it had been taught by Paul and John and the other thinkers, and what its humbler members had worked out through active Christian life and their own thought. With these possessions it was equipped to press forward and conquer the world for Christ.

IX

ANCIENT AND MODERN STUDY OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

Before we leave the apostolic age, the task still remains of considering briefly the various views about this period which earlier and later times, and especially modern critical students, have held. This inquiry is important both because it ought to give us greater confidence in the results that have been reached, as well as show us where the present problems lie, and also because some of the controversies which have centered about this period have made much noise in the Church at large, while their echoes still resound at the present day.

First of all we have, of course, the view which we have already found in our most ancient history of the Christian Church, the Book of Acts. The Acts, probably written within forty years of the latest events which it narrates, and itself a product as well as a history of the apostolic age, looks back on the earlier half of our period and

sees there three main facts. For the author of Acts the period of his book is distinguished, first and foremost, as that in which took place the great transfer of Christianity from Jerusalem to the gentile world and Rome. Christianity began as a Jewish sect; when he takes leave of his subject it has established itself at many points in the civilized world and at Rome, the centre of that world. The significance of this change he evidently understands fully, and he brings it out in his history with rare and telling skill. This transition was made possible by the second great fact upon which he lays stress, namely the establishment of freedom for the gentile churches. At a time when Jerusalem was still the mother church and carried controlling influence, certain Jewish Christians of Pharisaic origin and Pharisaic spirit tried to hold the whole Christian Church within the limits of circumcision and the Jewish law. If they had been successful, the world-wide development and permanence of Christianity would have been impossible. They were resisted by Paul, and the rightful freedom of the gentile churches then vindicated became acknowledged. The significance of this controversy and its result was apparent to the author of Acts, and he makes it a central point in his narrative. The third fact

which dominates the view of Luke is the supreme significance and greatness of the Apostle Paul in the early history of Christianity. Paul is the central figure in the two great movements which the book sketches, and in Luke's opinion his missionary work created the framework on which the later Church was built.

These three great facts, the great transition, the acknowledged Christian freedom on which it rested, and the career of Paul, are not exaggerated in importance by the significance assigned to them by this writer. He had a keen and correct eye for facts and for proportion, and these three facts must always remain of the first significance in any account of the period. Nevertheless, in the presentation of the history which this writer of Acts gives we can detect several limitations. In the earlier part of the book there is evident limitation of knowledge. He was not himself present at Jerusalem, and he can give only such recollections of others as he has been able, many years later, to gather. In the book as a whole, also, there is an obvious limitation in the point where the history ends. Our curiosity is stimulated as we think of how he might have told us of the trial and death of Paul, of the coming of Peter to Rome, of the persecution after Nero's fire, of the

progress of events in Asia Minor, of the effect on Christianity of the destruction of Jerusalem, of the later history of John.

But there are other limitations of a different sort. Not to speak here of possible limitations of accuracy, arising from the later writer's imperfect power of understanding earlier conditions, there are many matters about which we should like to know, or to know more, and of which the author must have had knowledge, yet to which he makes but slight or no allusion. Some of these we know to have occupied a prominent place in the life of the age, for we can read references to them in Paul, or can trace their working in the resulting conditions of a later time. Some are single incidents, like the details of Paul's relations to the Corinthians and Galatians, others are more general matters. For instance, we do not detect in Acts any development in Christian doctrine. Freedom from the Law is indeed a mooted question, but the writer does not conceive that there was here any growth in thought. He holds that freedom for the gentiles was implied from the start in the nature of Christianity, and that then, as circumstances arose, this inherent characteristic became explicit so soon as the opposite was affirmed. Of other debate among Christians we do

not hear, of the persistency of doctrinal controversy which Paul's epistles reveal we should not know at all from the pages of Acts, and there is scarcely a suggestion of the existence of those various types of false teachers and speculative dangers within the Church which greatly stimulated Paul's thought by opposition. There is no attempt to set forth and explain the origin of church institutions,—the regular meetings, the solemn rites, the officers. Likewise, and perhaps at first sight most surprising of all, there is not only no mention of the collection of the Gospel tradition, or the composition of the Gospels, (although Mark, who is repeatedly mentioned, was probably the author of one of them), but there is no hint that Paul ever wrote a single line. And last of all, why did the author not tell us something more of the life of Peter and John and the rest in the time preceding the moment when his book closes?

These limitations and omissions are to be accounted for in various ways. Some are due to the writer's intentional restriction of his scope. Others come from the fact that his purpose is primarily edifying, and that therefore such a disagreeable incident as Paul's rebuke of Peter at Antioch is naturally and properly omitted. Again,

his mind is more interested in concrete things than in abstract ideas. He tells his story by means of picturesque incidents, not in the form of large generalizations. And some of the most important of his omissions occur because he himself stood in the midst of this life of the apostolic age, and took for granted as matters of course countless circumstances which it would be of consequence to us to be told.

These limitations make it all the more fortunate that we are able to supplement the Book of Acts from the abundant evidence as to some sides of the history which the epistles of Paul present. The use of these and of the Gospels we have already observed and the construction of a general sketch of the apostolic age by the critical use of all this material has been the aim of the present essay.

After the author of Acts the first great Christian historian was Eusebius, "the Herodotus of the Christian Church," who lived in the early part of the fourth century. Inasmuch as he still had access to early literature which has since been lost, it would be natural to expect that he would supply a large amount of information about the apostolic age. He does, to be sure, tell us some things that are valuable, but in general he held

that the Book of Acts sufficiently covered this period, and so refrained from giving any continuous account of it. He plainly did not have the materials for a continuous history of that early time, except in so far as he found them in Acts. What he contributes in addition is mainly illustrative and supplementary. Thus he is interested, as was the writer of Acts, in the geographical spread of Christianity, but his knowledge is limited and he is able to add little except some statements of very doubtful trustworthiness about the field of work of the several apostles. He is further interested, as was natural for a courtier of the Emperor Constantine, in the connection of sacred with secular history, and especially in the disasters that befell the Jewish nation. Much of this information, however, is known to us from the same sources from which Eusebius derived it, and only occasionally can he offer a new fact. In the inner life of the church it is instructive to see how the points to which his attention directs itself are those which correspond to his own historical position. He stands at the beginning of the era of religious freedom, and so he is interested to preserve every account of martyrdom. He is a bishop of the Catholic Church, and as such he is concerned with three of the great characteristic interests of the

Old Catholic Church,—the opposition of heretics to the true doctrine, the origin of the books of the New Testament, which by his time had become sacred authority, and, especially, the direct and continuous succession of apostles, bishops, and deacons. From what he has recorded on these points something of value may be learned, but unfortunately it appears even here that he had but few sources of which the original is not accessible to us. Thus the history of Eusebius, while it is indispensable for the later periods, is of but moderate value for ours, and furnishes in no sense a history of the apostolic age.

Except by way of a mere paraphrase of the Book of Acts there seems never to have been any serious attempt to write a history of the apostolic age until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Critical investigations of one point and another had been made in increasing number ever since the Reformation, but it remained for the German scholars of the first half of the nineteenth century to conceive and carry through the fruitful idea of presenting a general historical account of the apostolic age in an independent view, founded on a fresh examination of the sources in the light of critical study. There was at this time an intellectual awakening in Germany to which the names,

among others, of Goethe, Schiller, Kant, and Hegel, bear witness. At the same time there was a strong religious interest in the whole nation; and, further, more than one group of Protestant theologians had largely or wholly emancipated themselves from traditional and dogmatic control. Moreover new and powerful methods in historical investigation had been wrought out and applied in various fields of study. The great name of Niebuhr still abides to-day even in popular thought as representative of this work. These influences combined to provide the stimulus for a new period of Biblical study. Both in the Old Testament and the New able men addressed themselves to the problems in a new spirit and with fresh energy. The result deeply stirred the Protestant world, as the works and ideas of these new writers gradually disseminated themselves in Holland, England, and America, and even in France and Italy.

In 1835 appeared the "Life of Jesus" by David Strauss, a brilliant youth of twenty-seven. In this book the Gospels were explained throughout as the record of myths, by which Strauss meant that the narratives are the symbolical expression of abstract moral and religious ideas, the pictorial form being largely built up by the aid

of details drawn from the Old Testament. Strauss's book was one of those inconclusive but startling works which precipitate discussion, help thought that has long been fluttering in solution to crystallize, and lead investigation into unworked and fruitful fields where, and where alone, the novel propositions can be tested. There had been many scattering discussions of the origin of the books of the New Testament and of topics in the history of the apostolic age and of the immediately succeeding period. It now became evident that any adequate investigation of the questions which Strauss had brought to the front of popular interest must proceed by thorough study of the nature of the literary sources comprising the New Testament. And as these writings purported to be the product of the apostolic age, every question connected with that period at once became of new and vital concern. Furthermore, since the early history of all the documents which make up the New Testament is to be learned, if at all, from the earliest Christian writers who use them, the Christian literature of the next following period, forming the so-called Apostolic Fathers, as well as the other writers of the second century and the heretical movements of the same time, acquired new importance and began to be

studied with ever increasing zeal. The whole manifestation of interest in these studies ought not to be ascribed to Strauss, for the elements were already present and would have combined in any case. Yet the publication of his book in 1835 was the occasion of much that followed.

Considerably older than Strauss, and at one time his teacher, like him a native of the kingdom of Würtemberg in southern Germany, was Ferdinand Christian Baur. He had been for nearly ten years professor at Tübingen, the university belonging to the king of Würtemberg, when Strauss's book was published. A man possessed of far greater learning, historical breadth, philosophical insight, and, above all, religious depth, than Strauss, he will be longer remembered, his books longer read, and his direct influence longer and more widely felt. Baur's main subject of study, to which his life was devoted, and in which his contributions to theological learning are of permanent value, was the history of Christian doctrine. As a part of this extended and systematic inquiry his thought was naturally turned to the beginnings of Christian theology in the thought of the apostolic age, and he applied himself diligently to all the fundamental literary, historical, and theological questions which there arise.

His first comprehensive book on the apostolic age was entitled "Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ," and was published in 1845. It contained a full and very able discussion of the life, writings and theology of Paul. Of the Pauline epistles Baur was willing to accept as genuine only the four to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. The statements of the Book of Acts he found to be in part in conflict with the historical indications found in those epistles, but in part to be confirmed by them. Eight years later in 1853 Baur published a more inclusive work, "The Christianity of the First Three Centuries," in which his whole conception of the apostolic age and its relation to later Christianity was fully set forth. He died in 1860. The whole number of his published articles and books on theological subjects was very large.

Baur approached the earliest history of Christianity from the point of view of theology and philosophy, not of history proper. His first concern was not with the incidents, but with the underlying idea which he saw revealed in the progress of events and the development of thought. At the outset of his career he said, "Apart from philosophy, history seems to me eternally dead and dumb," by which he meant that

whatever interest he had in history sprang from his belief that it is the expression of the mind of God. Only as it is seen to be through and through rational, to be everywhere the unfolding and development of the Idea, is it understood. To trace God's thoughts after him was to his mind the task not only of the astronomer but of the historian.

From this fundamental point of view and mode of approach Baur worked with admirable consistency. He was himself the very type of the learned professor abiding in the realm of abstract thought, and both the noble elevation of his thought and the immediate and far-reaching influence of his conclusions sprang from this lofty aim. But it was also a source of weakness, for it led him to make theory supreme, and dulled his perception of reality in concrete phenomena. The man who holds the Epistle to Philemon to be fictitious allegory has lived too much in the abstractions of eternity and not enough in the world of men to be a perfectly trustworthy critic or a historian of the very first rank.

The view of the apostolic age held by Baur and by certain of his pupils and friends, who with him formed what is called the Tübingen school of critics, stirred Christian thought as much as

had the "Life of Jesus" of David Strauss. The Tübingen view had two sides, or rather combined two parallel and interrelated lines of thought. On the one hand it was a critical investigation of the genuineness, date, and significance of the various books of the New Testament. But on the other hand the results here reached had to be tested by Baur's general view of the rational meaning of the apostolic age, which was his primary interest in the whole study. If the general view and philosophical understanding of the course of the history were true, it and the results of a critical literary investigation of the documents would agree with one another. The results which Baur and his friends reached on these two sides did agree.

The general view can be briefly stated. The philosopher Hegel, of whom these scholars were devoted followers, had established the formula for historical, as for other, truth, that progress is made by the compromise and reconciling of opposites. It has been said that in this view all history can be summed up in the three monosyllables, Yes, No, But. The more serious terms were thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Starting from this view Baur approached the apostolic age. The great conflict which unlocked the secret of that

period showed itself, he believed, in the four genuine epistles of Paul, notably in Galatians and II Corinthians. It was nothing else than the conflict with the Jewish Christians in which Paul was engaged, and which Baur made to be the one dominant issue of apostolic Christianity. The rational basis of the apostolic age was clear in all its impressive simplicity. In the thought of Jesus Christ lay two elements, a Jewish limited and temporary form and, carried along with that, a universally valuable and permanent substance. The limited and Jewish became the basis of the Jewish Christian party, and this was what the philosophers would call the thesis. The universal and permanent was that upon which Paul seized, and was the antithesis. Peter and James and the original apostles stood on one side, Paul and his friends on the other. Out of the clash of these two parties grew a reconcilement and union, in which certain elements of Paulinism—notably the universal applicability of the Gospel—were preserved, but the Jewish Christian influence was predominant. Out of this type of Christian thought, termed the "Union Christianity" of the second century, grew the well-known Christian thought and life of the Old Catholic Church at the end of the

second century. Baur and his friends, as German Lutherans, sincerely reverenced the Apostle Paul and his thought; the result of the weakening of that thought to the level of a judaized Union Christianity was, to their minds, to destroy the purity and diminish the power of spiritual Christianity, and to build up that Catholic Church from which only by a Reformation the world was to gain freedom.

Now this imposing construction, while it seemed at first sight to suit well the facts of the four leading epistles of Paul, does not well suit any of the other books of the New Testament. Baur tried indeed, but without lasting success, to show that the same three types of Christian thought are represented by the three Synoptic Gospels,—Matthew being the Jewish writer, Luke the Pauline, and Mark the unionistic follower and epitomator of both. But when this view of the Gospels was tested it broke down at every point. Those are not the true characteristics of the several Gospels, nor does the particular literary connection now shown on independent critical grounds to exist between the Gospels permit this view of their relation. In the other books of the New Testament there appears even less of this controversy of Jewish and Pauline Christianity. Many of the

epistles ascribed to Paul say nothing at all about the controversy with the Judaizers or even about the contrast of faith and works. The Book of Acts presents a picture of harmonious relations between Paul and the original Twelve. The Gospel and epistles of John seem to come from a thinker with whom all attempt to restrict Christianity to Jewish limits is wholly below the horizon. Only the Book of Revelation, the most Jewish book in the sacred collection, contains some expressions which can be referred (although it is at present thought not with justice) to a strained relation between the writer and Paul.

For all these facts an easy explanation lay ready at hand. The genuineness of some of these writings had already been doubted on other grounds. Baur himself had written elaborately to prove the Pastoral Epistles to be the product of the Gnostic controversies of the second century. It became evident to him that all these writings proceeded not from the period of Paul's life and the earlier apostolic age, but from the later time of Union Christianity, when the Church had forgotten, or wanted to forget, the old disputes and was eager to advance upon the new foundation that had been laid. These books were to be assigned to dates well down in the second

century, the Gospels being set between 130 and 170. The Book of Acts gave, he held, a view of the history wholly distorted by its partisan tendency or bias, and had as its main purpose to recommend Paul—thus falsely presented in Jewish colors—to Jewish Christians, and to show that he and Peter together, and not either one alone, were the proper heroes of Christian history. The epistles of Paul (except the great four) were intended to secure the great advantage of Paul's name and authority for doctrines of later growth.

This entire reconstruction of early Christian history sounds incredible when it is baldly stated in a brief review. When presented at length in detail, buttressed at every point by able arguments of literary and historical criticism, it is a dazzling and a fascinating picture; and it made a powerful impression on many who read the successive books in which it was gradually wrought out. To many it seemed at last to have brought the recalcitrant period of the founding of Christianity into relation with the general history of the world and of human thought and with rational philosophy. From this side it was greeted as providing the permanent basis for all future work, a construction of the history founded not on the shifting sands of tradition, but on the solid rock

of critically ascertained fact. By those, however, who occupied the point of view of traditional Christianity the revolutionary significance of these ideas was instantly seen. The greater part of the New Testament was to be deemed a mass of deliberate forgeries; the Book of Acts was utterly untrustworthy; the Gospels so late that there seemed abundant room for the growth of every sort of error, legend, and myth. Learned scholars could perhaps rebuild their religion by a recondite method of speculative philosophy; but popular Christianity was then, even more than to-day, held to depend for its proof mainly on the narratives of miraculous events contained in the Gospels. Necessarily these new views stimulated to fresh and thorough investigation by those whose fundamental principles made them sure that the Tübingen views were wrong.

The Tübingen work had been philosophical in its motive; its method of proof was historical. This compelled the opponents of Baur, as well as his later successors, to follow a rigidly historical method, and the result has been of enormous advantage to the study of Christian history. Incidentally the Tübingen view has been shown to be wrong, and to-day is perhaps held by no scholar of note, although some aged men still hold

views approximating to it. If it is the custom today to laud the Tübingen scholars and to reject their teaching, the reason is that that teaching was the product of the imperfect application under strong but honest prejudice of sound critical methods. Hence it was a fruitful failure.

Before we turn to the later critical study it may be interesting to delay for a moment to note the situation in this immediate community of New England at the time when these books were stirring thought in Germany. The rapidity of the development of these studies in the last half-century is one of the interesting aspects of the subject. Persons are still living who well remember the year 1835, in which appeared Strauss's Life of Jesus. The period from 1835 to 1850 represents the height of the controversy between Unitarians and Orthodox Congregationalists in Massachusetts, and the revival of religious zeal in the orthodox behalf to which that controversy gave rise. It was the time in which within the Unitarian body the division into the camps of Theodore Parker and of Channing was taking place. In 1838 Emerson delivered his Divinity School Address; in 1841 Parker preached the sermon on "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity" which stirred so deeply the opposi-

tion of his less radical brethren. Questions equally far-reaching in their bearings with the German ones were thus being raised among us, but they were not yet made the subject of so thorough or so learned discussions and their character was not such as greatly to stimulate historical scholarship. At about the same time Horace Bushnell was beginning in Connecticut his productive career. His book "God in Christ" was published in 1849. In general the investigation of New Testament history in a purely scientific spirit apart from its direct practical bearings upon other theological controversy was not at that period much pursued in this country.

The same may be said of England. At that moment nearly all vital religious thought in England was occupied with the questions arising out of the Tractarian movement and the Catholic revival. The famous "Tract No. XC" was published in 1841, and all England was occupied in an intense study of the Church Fathers, which was not as a rule pushed back with vigor to the early second century, still less to the apostolic age and the New Testament. In a few years this state of things was profoundly changed both in England and in America.

At first, however, it was in Germany that the

debate over the new and, as they assumed to be called, critical views of early Christian history was undertaken. Only a wholly new defence of traditional ideas could meet this attack, so that the older men who attempted the task made little impression on the discussion. The real reply, which inflicted a mortal wound, came from a man of the younger generation, Albrecht Ritschl, himself a pupil of Baur who had learned the lesson of his master's method. He died in 1889, and is more famous at present as the founder of a school of devout liberal theologians than for his contributions to history. Whether his permanent fame may not rather depend upon the latter may well be doubted. Ritschl published in 1857, twelve years after Baur's "Paul," a small book entitled "The Rise of the Old Catholic Church," in which he discussed and portrayed on a broad canvas the principles and tendencies of early Christian history. It was a stroke which pierced the armor of Tübingen, and gave a deathblow because it smote a vital part.

Ritschl pointed out that Baur's fundamental notion of two parties which divided the apostolic age between them was disproved by the particular documents on which Baur himself relied. The historical basis necessary for the support of the

speculative edifice was lacking. Not the Twelve Apostles but other Jewish Christians were Paul's opponents; the Twelve, although they did not hold all of Paul's views, were nevertheless his friends; and, moreover, Paul's side was not homogeneous, for there were hundreds, and later thousands, of gentile Christians who but imperfectly understood his views. The complication introduced into the picture by these discoveries was in marked contrast to the simplicity of the Yes, No, But of Tübingen; it was no longer possible to say that the apostolic age offered no room for the situations presupposed in the later epistles of Paul and in the Acts, and that therefore these books must be products of a late date in the second century. The vigor of Baur's logic was destroyed by cutting away one of its premises. It was possible for Ritschl to show that the general account of the apostolic age given in the Book of Acts, although, as we have seen, it omits much that we otherwise know or can infer, is yet in substantial agreement with Paul and not in contradiction to him. Moreover he argued with convincing force that if the documents are taken at their face value, the picture of the apostolic age given by the New Testament is a self-consistent one, and that this picture is of such a

nature that it could not possibly have been invented at a much later time, when conditions had greatly changed.

The precise views of the several books of the New Testament which Ritschl held have not in all cases been sustained by later dispassionate criticism, and, indeed, Ritschl made in this book but small contribution to those detailed questions of date and authorship. But the general tradition of the Church which he, rather uncritically, followed, has in so many cases proved to be right that it was on the whole a safer guide than the Hegelian philosophy. The main outlines, though not the details, of Ritschl's view, as sketched above, have been confirmed by nearly all the special work which countless scholars since his time have bestowed on single problems.

In England the views of the Tübingen school met with rather slow response. Between 1865 and 1875, however, some comprehensive works were published in which the Tübingen view was reproduced with little originality of treatment. The most important of these was the work entitled "Supernatural Religion," published anonymously in 1874, which made an enormous sensation, and rapidly proceeded to seven editions. This book undertook to show that Christianity was not true,

because the real occurrence of miracles could not be proved; and to this end the origin and trustworthiness of the Gospels and Acts were elaborately discussed. The book is not worthy of its subject either in scholarship or honesty. Its main interest at the present day is in showing how little trained for thorough-going discussions of these themes was the British theological public of 1874, and thus as furnishing a measure of the progress made since that time; it is also important because it called out one of the works of the greatest of English scholars in these fields, Bishop Lightfoot.

Bishop Lightfoot's massive volumes on the chief Apostolic Fathers and his commentaries on four of the Pauline epistles, while not including any general view of the apostolic age, were contributions of great importance to our subject, not only because to the mind of an increasing number of scholars they have seemed to prove their contentions on the important disputed themes of which they treat, but also because they proceeded from a learned, comprehensive and mature historical grasp of the whole period. With the name of Lightfoot must always be mentioned his two friends and fellow-workers Bishop Westcott and Professor Hort. Of their work and that of a

large number of other scholars who have touched, usually directly but seldom comprehensively, on the subject we cannot here speak. Likewise in America the important independent contributions to New Testament learning have until recently either related to single topics or been concerned with the fundamental philological sciences on which the whole structure must ultimately rest. In such studies the names of Robinson, Hackett, Ezra Abbot, and Thayer deserve special mention.

An important contribution to the history of the apostolic age was made in France in 1866 and the following years by Ernest Renan's "History of the Origins of Christianity." This great work stands in many ways apart from both German and English books, and is built on an independent study of the sources, although the author knew and freely used German investigations. Mommsen once said of him that he was a great historian in spite of his charming style. Renan's "Origins of Christianity" is planned on a broad scale and uses material from every source to construct as complete an historical picture as possible. Herein lies its great advantage over nearly all similar books. It includes the history of the second century, and so finds natural place not only for all the books of the New Testament but for the

next succeeding literature as well. Its critical positions are often surprisingly conservative, for Renan was restrained by his exquisite literary perception and artistic taste from some of the extravagances of German criticism. But it is an unsatisfactory book, for it is the work of a skeptic. It lacks seriousness, and its sentimental prettiness grows tiresome. It is often suggestive and informing, but its author was a great literary artist, not a profound historical thinker. Upon the serious problems which concerned Baur, and have concerned most students since, Renan often hardly touches, because to his philosophy history is after all a chain of phenomena, not the expression of the Eternal Reason.

In Germany in the last half-century the several departments of New Testament study have all been represented by competent and devoted investigators, and these scholars have all contributed in their measure to the completeness of critical knowledge of the apostolic age. Profound and massive erudition like that of Theodor Zahn brought to bear on single points of lesser and larger importance, broad grasp and suggestive insight like that of Harnack, detailed study of the texts like that of Bernhard Weiss, skillful criticism and encyclopedic learning like that of Hein-

rich Holtzmann, are some of the various types of theology and scholarship that have had their distinguished followers. From the ranks of these numerous scholars several histories of the apostolic age have proceeded. The most important of these, and at the same time the most important modern book on the general subject, is Weizsäcker's "Apostolic Age," first published in 1886. Later investigation and continued discussion have now led many to different conclusions from those of Weizsäcker in numerous points of detail, and his work will be supplemented and superseded; but the self-consistency which he has succeeded in giving to his portrayal of the conditions of the period and the development of thought within it, and the sober and thorough criticism on which the whole rests render his general position one which it will be difficult for any attack to overthrow. Weizsäcker may be said to have completed the work of Ritschl, great as are the differences between them both in method and results.

For English readers a similar service is rendered by Professor McGiffert's "Apostolic Age," (1897), a useful book written in the same candid spirit and presenting much the same general picture, but reaching by independent scholar-

ship its own conclusions. Very recent noteworthy German studies are, among others, the suggestive and valuable books of von Dobschütz, the second edition of Pfleiderer's "Primitive Christianity," and the "Beginnings of Our Religion" by Wernle. Among these Pfleiderer's view is the most distinctive, for he is a philosopher as well as an historian. He especially emphasizes the original Hellenic element in Paul, and conceives that the natural development of Paul's system in the hands of his followers led to the sloughing off of the Pharisaic elements which had at first been carried along with the rest, so that there was left a "Christian Hellenism, which issued on the side of speculative thought in the Johannine theology of Asia Minor, on that of practical affairs in the church life of Rome."

The conception of the apostolic age presented by Baur and his school was founded on a clearly defined theory of the whole history which was itself revolutionary of traditional views. Later conceptions of the history have not usually rested on any similar fundamental theory. Scholars have applied to tradition and to the literary remains of the period their critical tests, and then by a simple inductive process have constructed their picture. As one or another element of the tra-

dition had to be dropped or was deemed established, as to one or another condition revealed in the epistles of Paul or elsewhere was ascribed a leading significance, the picture has varied. The unity which historians have been able to find in the period has generally been conceived as due to the working of simple forces in a small number of elements. In recent years, however, one radical school of students has arisen, having its centre in Holland, which resembles the Tübingen critics in using a comprehensive theory as a guide to the development of events in the apostolic and post-apostolic ages. This group has exercised but a narrow influence on New Testament scholars, but since it is represented by a fair number of men of great learning and much productive activity, it is worth while to speak briefly of their views. The leading exponent of these views is the late Professor van Manen of the University of Leyden, from whose articles in the "Encyclopædia Biblica" English-speaking readers can gain knowledge of his and his friends' work.

In exact contradiction to the Tübingen view these Dutch critics hold that not the reconciling of opposites but a continuous, regular, and gradual evolution is the law of history. Thus, although it

is admitted that there existed in the apostolic age a Christian disciple named Paul, his ideas were not especially original or novel. He did not separate himself from Jewish modes of life and the Jewish law. There was no marked difference of thought between him and other disciples. That none of the epistles now called by the name of Paul were written by such a man hardly needs to be said. Of his origin and character and his career as a wandering preacher we gain some notion from the Book of Acts, but we have no instruments of criticism which enable us to determine how much of the account in Acts is true and how much fiction. Of the development of events in the history of Paul and the other Jews and of the Gentiles whom they converted we know scarcely anything, for the Epistle of Clement of Rome is an ungenuine product of about the year 140 (a date nearly fifty years later than the one usually given), while the epistles of Ignatius are pseudonymous writings concocted at Rome about the year 150. Our main fixed point is a circle of "progressive believers" in the first half of the second century who adopted as their hero the Apostle Paul, dead nearly a century before, grouped themselves around his memory and name, and

presented their own ideas by the aid of his falsely assumed authority. These Christians issued successively in Paul's name the various pseudonymous epistles which constitute our Pauline collection. The slight differences in theological conception and emphasis to be found in these epistles betray the diversity of the authors who contributed to the series, the general unity of thought testifies to the compactness of the group. In another fifty years, by the end of the century, the "Paul" who had thus been invented, and who was in reality but the embodiment of a school of thought, had become "the Apostle" throughout the whole Catholic Church.

At the serious detailed labor which has been spent in attempting to show that the documents of the New Testament and early Christianity can be explained only by this theory we cannot here even glance. The Dutch scholars are perhaps right in saying that the same arguments which have long convinced many that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon are not genuine writings of Paul can be used against Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. But to many critical scholars those arguments have proved unconvincing in both cases alike. Without the unfavorable judgment as to genuineness and date of documents

which belongs to this radical and revolutionary view of early Christian history the view itself is impossible; and to anyone who does not hold the underlying "rectilinear" philosophy of history, it is not attractive as solving the problem of the period. But few scholars accept it, and it does not seem to make headway in the world. Perhaps the most interesting fact connected with it is the contrast which is presented by the slight sensation made when even eminent scholars propounded this strange view and the enormous stir when the Tübingen theory became known to the Christian world. The change is not due to indifference to the study of the Bible. On the contrary it signifies that at least the Protestant world has now been trained to the idea and method of historical study of Christian origins, and thereby has gained a profounder confidence in the Truth and in the power of honest critical study to elicit Truth.

The view of the apostolic age and its contribution to Christian history underlying the present essay is substantially that maintained by Ritschl. Instead of Baur's conception of a Jewish Christianity fighting against Paul until it conquered him, won predominance, and produced Catholicism, we have seen Jewish Christianity

dwindling to an unimportant sect and disappearing. Moreover Paul himself, though bolder in spirit, and far abler and more original in intellectual endowment, and broader in knowledge and experience than the Twelve Apostles and earliest Galilean disciples, was nevertheless not fundamentally at variance nor permanently in controversy with them. His thought was richer and freer than theirs, but, after all, he was like them a Jew, with Jewish training and ideas, who had been brought to believe that Jesus was Christ, the risen Lord. Beside Paul in the gentile world were other workers, not rivals with him, but likewise loyally devoted to a common Master's cause, apostles and evangelists who contributed each as he could. Our knowledge of the earlier stages of this work is mainly from its result, the spread of Christianity, and from its literary monument, the first three Gospels, which represent not controversy but evangelism. Later the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews built on Paul but made his own noble and permanently effective contribution to Christian thought. So also the author of the Gospel and epistles of John, who was doubtless acquainted with something of Paul's theology and certainly rested on the freedom that Paul had won, lived in a world

of thought not specifically Pauline, and represents not a modified Paulinism but a parallel, though not inharmonious, system of thought. We have further observed that the distinctive controlling principles of Hebrews and John were not absent from Paul, though with him they were subordinate, and that the same is true of many other tendencies, less valuable than these, of which we find traces in Paul, but which were evidently stronger in the average gentile Christianity of the churches. These elements, which naturally were for the most part not Jewish but Greek and Roman, go far to explain the possibility of the development from primitive to Catholic Christianity.

At the present moment further progress in the understanding of these subjects seems likely to come from an enlargement of the field. By a better understanding of later Jewish thought, by the broadening of knowledge of the Greek and Roman world into which Christianity came and the perception of the mode in which that world reacted on Christianity itself, by a longer outlook upon the next following age,—in these and similar ways we may hope to understand better the age of the apostles. As we understand it better, we shall find ourselves more and more

convinced that the power and fruitfulness of Christianity, in that age and in this, springs from the character and person of that Jesus Christ whom the simple and uncritical reader can learn to know in the Gospels.

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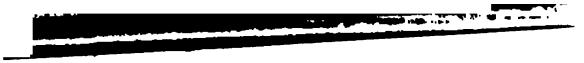
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